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THE
COMPLETE WORKS OF
EMILY BRONTË
IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

POETRY

This edition is limited to 1000 *copies in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, its Colonies and Dependencies, and the United States of America*

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF EMILY BRONTË

EDITED BY

CLEMENT SHORTER

WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
NEW YORK AND LONDON

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A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The admirer of Emily Brontë and her work has known her poetry up to the present through only some thirty-nine poems. There were twenty-two poems in the little volume entitled Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, *which was the first venture of the three Miss Brontës, and there were yet another seventeen in the Posthumous Poems that Charlotte Brontë printed after Emily's death. These thirty-nine poems have been reprinted many times, usually at the end of* The Professor. *No less than one hundred and thirty-eight additional poems are included in the present volume. Although it cannot be pretended that any one of these is equal to 'The Old Stoic,' that gave so much distinction to the first volume, or to the 'Last Lines,' that were the unforgettable glory of the second, it will scarcely be disputed that these newly printed verses are of profound interest.*

There is no incident in the profoundly pathetic story of the Brontës better known than that of the publication of the poems by the three sisters through the firm of Aylott and Jones of Paternoster Row. The little book bears the date 1846. *Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë here courted public favour for the first time. Only two copies were sold, as we learn from a letter that Currer Bell sent to certain eminent contemporaries —to Tennyson, to Lockhart, to De Quincey, and to others. Here is the letter in question:—*

June 16th, 1847.

Sir,—My relatives, Ellis and Acton Bell, and myself, heedless of the repeated warnings of various respectable publishers, have committed the rash act of printing a volume of poems.

The consequences predicted have, of course, overtaken us: our book is found to be a drug; no man needs it or heeds it. In the space of a year our publisher has disposed but of two copies, and by what painful efforts he succeeded in getting rid of these two, himself only knows.

Before transferring the edition to the trunkmakers, we have decided on distributing as presents a few copies of what we cannot sell; and we beg to offer you one in acknowledgment of the pleasure and profit we have often and long derived from your works.—I am, sir, yours very respectfully, CURRER BELL.[1]

It is a curious irony of circumstance that this little volume, which so failed of recognition when that would have heartened its authors beyond measure, now sells, on the rare occasions that it turns up in the sale-rooms, for more money than the whole issue cost Charlotte Brontë and her sisters when they had it published at their own expense.

The additional poems which form, as may be seen, the larger part of this volume (pp. 85-333*) were contained in note-books that Charlotte Brontë had handled tenderly when she made her Selection after Emily and Anne had died. These little note-books were lent to me by Mr. Nicholls, her husband, some forty years afterwards, with permission to publish whatever I liked from them. No one to-day will deny to them a certain bibliographical interest.*

CLEMENT SHORTER.

April 24th, 1908.

[1] *De Quincey Memorials,* by Alexander H. Japp. See also *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: a Memoir,* by his Son, 1898, and Lockhart's *Life* by Andrew Lang, 1897.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON EMILY BRONTË

I

THIS volume contains the complete poems of Emily Brontë. Of these twenty-two appeared in the *Poems* of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell published in 1846. After the death of Emily Brontë, seventeen poems were published by Charlotte Brontë. These are all derived from a manuscript transcribed in February 1844 by Emily Brontë, and written in microscopic characters. Four were left unprinted by Charlotte Brontë, and are now published. In addition, there was another volume of manuscripts and some poems written on small slips of paper of various sizes. All of these were unpublished till 1902, when sixty-seven were privately printed by Dodd, Mead and Co. in an edition of only a hundred and ten copies. The rest of this volume, containing seventy-one poems, is here printed for the first time, and in a limited edition. It is not claimed for a moment that the intrinsic

merits of the verses are of a special kind. But so very little is known of Emily Brontë, the greatest woman genius of the nineteenth century, that whatever throws light upon her thoughts is of high interest to her lovers. It is only for these that this book has been compiled and printed.

How small our knowledge of Emily Brontë's life is may be best shown by a brief chronological account of her thirty years :—

1818.—Emily Brontë born at Thornton.

1820.—Anne Brontë born at Thornton.

1820.—The family remove to Haworth.

1821 (September).—The mother, Mrs. Brontë, died.

1824.—The little Brontë girls went to school at Cowan's Bridge. Emily, the prettiest of the little sisters, was 'a darling child, under five years of age, quite the pet nursling of the school.' As a matter of fact, Emily was in her seventh year.

1826.—The children established their plays, each choosing representatives. Emily chose Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Lockhart, and Johnny Lockhart. *Blackwood's Magazine* was the favourite reading of the children, and they had also Southey and Sir Walter Scott left by

their Cornish mother, and 'some mad Methodist magazines full of miracles and apparitions, and preternatural warnings.'

1831.—Charlotte Brontë went to school at Roe Head.

1832.—Charlotte returned to Haworth in order to teach Emily and Anne what she had learned. After lessons they walked on the moors. At home Emily was a quiet girl of fourteen, helping in the housework and learning her lessons regularly. On the moors she was gay, frolicsome, almost wild. She would set the others laughing with her quaint sallies and genial ways. She is described as 'a strange figure—tall, slim, angular, with a quantity of dark brown hair, deep, beautiful hazel eyes that could flash with passion, features somewhat strong and stern, the mouth prominent and resolute.'

1833.—Ellen Nussey, Charlotte Brontë's friend, came to Haworth, and made acquaintance with Emily, then about fifteen. Miss Nussey describes her as not ugly, but with irregular features, and a pallid thick complexion, and 'kind, kindling, liquid eyes.' She had no grace or style in dress. She was a great walker, and very fond of animals. Only one dog was

allowed to her, though two seemed to have got into the house. Emily was very happy on the moor and talked freely.

1835.—Emily, when close on seventeen, went to school at Roe Head with Charlotte. The change from her own home to a school, and from her secluded but free and simple life to discipline and companionship, she found intolerable. She became miserably ill, threatening consumption, and had to go home. This restored her health almost immediately.

In this year she found her brother Branwell beginning to go wrong, drinking in the public house and doing no work.

1836 (Midsummer). — Miss Nussey and Charlotte went to Haworth, and the girls had a taste of happiness and enjoyment. 'They were beginning to feel conscious of their powers, they were rich in each other's companionship ; their health was good, their spirits were high, there was often joyousness and mirth ; they commented on what they read ; analysed articles and their writers also ; the perfection of unrestrained talk and intelligence brightened the close of the days which were passing all too swiftly.' Charlotte and Emily would dance in exuberant spirits.

1836 (September).—Emily went into a situation as teacher in Miss Patchet's school at Law Hill, near Halifax, where there were some forty girls. She worked from six in the morning till eleven at night, with only half an hour of exercise between, and soon broke down. At Christmas she came home to Haworth for a brief rest, and then returned to Halifax.

1837 (Spring).—Emily's health broke down, and she came back to Haworth.

1837-38.—Emily alone at Haworth. Anne, Charlotte, and, for a time, Branwell were away.

1837 (Christmas) found Charlotte, Emily, and Anne at Haworth nursing their old servant, Tabby, who had fallen on the slippery street and broken her leg.

1839.—Charlotte writes: 'I manage the ironing and keep the rooms clean; Emily does the baking and attends to the kitchen.'

1840.—Emily, Branwell, and Charlotte were all at home together. Charlotte and Branwell had sent their writings to authors, Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, but Emily had not. Her manuscripts were in her locked desk. Emily, Anne, and Charlotte were hoping to enlarge the parsonage at Haworth and keep school.

1840.—Things were going fairly well, and Emily was, on the whole, happy. I have been told by Miss Nussey that the one man outside her home in whom Emily ever showed any interest was Mr. Brontë's first curate, the Rev. William Weightman. There was nothing like a love affair between them, but she was gracious to him and enjoyed his jests as they all walked together on the moors. But it is on record that Emily was trying to prevent the curate from pressing his attentions on Miss Nussey. It would seem that in no man's eyes was Emily passing fair. Emily's countenance, said Miss Nussey, 'glimmered,' as it always did when she enjoyed herself.

1841.—In the early months she was as happy as other country girls in a congenial home. Later on Miss Wooler offered Charlotte the good-will of her school at Dewsbury Moor, but though the girls wished to accept, no arrangement was carried through. In September Charlotte proposes to go with Emily to Brussels, in order that they might learn French and German, and fit themselves for keeping a school. She calculated that the journey would cost only five pounds for each, and that the living would be half as dear as in England. 'I feel an

absolute conviction that if this advantage could be allowed to us, it would be the making of us for life.' Arrangements were made to decline the school at Dewsbury Moor. Bridlington was thought of. Emily assented, being anxious that the school should be started.

1842.—Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels to the school of the Hégers. Héger thought that Emily knew no French at all. She was oddly dressed, and wore amazing leg-of-mutton sleeves, her pet whim in and out of fashion. She had a bitter sense of exile, but Charlotte enjoyed the change. Emily did not like Héger, and was as indomitable and fierce as Charlotte was gentle and obedient. But Héger thought Emily had more genius than her sister. He was deeply impressed with her faculty of imagination and her argumentative powers, and said : 'She should have been a man : a great navigator !' But the two were never friends. Emily was 'wild for home,' and seldom spoke a word to any one. It was probably at this time that she composed the poem 'at twilight in the schoolroom,'—'The house is old, the trees are bare.'

In the meantime, Charlotte was almost dangerously happy, but knew that Emily and

her teacher did not draw well together. Emily, however, was working very hard, especially at German and music. She became an excellent musician, and her piano playing is described as singularly accurate and expressive. The two studied French under Héger, whose method was to take an author and investigate his technique. Emily complained against this method, and said that it destroyed all originality of thought and expression. But in spite of this she wrote better exercises than Charlotte did. All the while she was in revolt. She made no intimate companions, and suffered much, disliking intensely what she thought the 'gentle Jesuitry of the foreign and Romish system.' Only her desire to be independent kept her in Brussels.

1842.—Madame Héger proposed that Charlotte should teach English, and that Emily should teach music to the younger pupils, so that they might stay on without paying for half a year. They were too poor to go home for their holidays in August and September, and remained in Brussels. But they were called back in the end of October by the death of their aunt.

1842 (Christmas).—They were invited by

Héger to go back to Brussels. Emily would not consent. Branwell was at home, but the sisters had not seen him at his worst, and they were happy for three months.

1843 (January).—Charlotte went back to Brussels. Emily was left behind with Branwell for a short time. Branwell went away as tutor, and Emily was left alone with her father and old Tabby helping in the housework. She had Flossie, Anne's favourite spaniel, and Keeper, the fierce bulldog, cats, and other animals. Charlotte was not happy at Brussels. Branwell was still drinking, and Anne was very anxious about him. Mr. Brontë, the father, was in failing health and tempted by stimulants. In the end of this year Emily wrote to Charlotte urging her return.

1844 (January).—Charlotte arrived at Haworth very reluctantly. 'Haworth seems such a lonely quiet spot.'

1844 (March).—Emily and Charlotte were together thinking over the future. Charlotte wrote: 'Our poor little cat has been ill two days, and is just dead. It is piteous to see even an animal lying lifeless. Emily *is* sorry.' The girls wrote for pupils, but failed to get them. Branwell got worse and worse, drinking heavily

to excess. Emily had no friends. They gave up the idea of having pupils.

1844 (July).—Charlotte visited Miss Nussey. When she came back she found Branwell dismissed by his employer. Charlotte, writing of her sister Emily, afterwards said : 'She had in the course of her life been called upon to contemplate near the end and for a long time the terrible effects of talents misused and faculties abused ; hers was naturally a sensitive, reserved, and dejected nature ; what she saw went very deeply into her mind : it did her harm.' Madame Duclaux (Miss A. Mary F. Robinson) in her truly sympathetic book on Emily Brontë, argues that Emily never wearied in her kindness for her unhappy brother, and always hoped to win him back by love when the other sisters had despaired. In March 1846, Charlotte Brontë wrote to Ellen : 'I went into the room where Branwell was to speak to him, about an hour after I got home ; it was very forced work to address him. I might have spared myself the trouble, as he took no notice and made no reply ; he was stupefied. My fears were not vain. I hear that he got a sovereign while I have been away, under pretence of paying a pressing debt ; he went im-

mediately and changed it at a public house, and has employed it as was to be expected. Emily concluded her account by saying that he was a hopeless being. It is too true. In his present state it is scarcely possible to stay in the room where he is.' Madame Duclaux has also a very graphic account of a fire in which drunken Branwell must have been burned to death had it not been that Emily entered the blazing room, and half carried in her arms, half dragged out, her besotted brother. This is no doubt part of the extremely questionable Brontë tradition. The legend is almost certainly based on a similar episode in *Jane Eyre*. Mr. Swinburne had a special delight in the belief that Emily was kinder than her sisters, but, as Mr. Shorter has shown, there is no clear evidence for the fact. It is quite plain that she did less in the way of remonstrance than the others.

1845.—In autumn Charlotte accidentally lighted on a manuscript volume of verses in her sister's handwriting. She saw the value of the poems, and caught their new note. It was resolved that the sisters should publish a little volume together.

1846 (May).—Poems of the sisters Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell were published by Messrs.

Aylott and Jones. The book cost the authors thirty guineas, and two copies supplied the public demand.

1846.—The three sisters were each busy on a novel, Emily was writing *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte *The Professor*, and Anne *Agnes Grey*. It was a heavy and dreary time. Branwell became more and more the oppression of the family. Out of very scanty means they had to pay his debts. The father was growing blind with cataract, and was deeply depressed, but the indomitable sisters completed their work, and Charlotte began *Jane Eyre*.

1846 (August).—Charlotte Brontë went to Manchester with her father, and Mr. Brontë went through an operation for cataract, which was successful. In the end of the year *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were accepted by Newby, a third-rate publisher of the time, who issued many worthless novels on commission.

1847.—*The Professor* was declined, but *Jane Eyre* was accepted and published by Smith and Elder.

1847 (14th December).—*Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were published by Newby, who was encouraged by the success of *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Brontë writes: '*Wuthering Heights*

is, I suppose, at length published, at least Mr. Newby has sent the authors their six copies. I wonder how it will be received. I should say it merits the epithets of vigorous and original much more decidedly than *Jane Eyre* did. *Agnes Grey* should please such critics as Mr. Lewes, for it is true and "unexaggerated" enough. The books are not well got up ; they abound in errors of the press.'

She writes on 21st December to W. S. Williams : 'You are not far wrong in your judgment respecting *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, Ellis has a strong original mind full of strange though sombre power. When he writes poetry that power speaks in language at once condensed, elaborated, and refined, but in prose it breaks forth in scenes which shock more than they attract. Ellis will improve, however, because he knows his defects. *Agnes Grey* is the mirror of the mind of the writer. The orthography and punctuation of the books are mortifying to a degree. Almost all the errors that are corrected in the proof sheets appear intact in what should have been fair copies.' I have before me Emily Brontë's own copy of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*. Never in all literature was any coupling so in-

congruous. The three volumes are in brown cloth labelled on the back *Wuthering Heights I.* ; *Wuthering Heights II.*; and *Agnes Grey III.* Emily has corrected some of the misprints. For example : 'The distance from the gate to the Grange is to (*sic*) miles.' 'They shut the house door below never noticing our absence, it was so full of people.' For 'it' is substituted 'the place.' One clause appears thus : 'Yah gooid fur nowt, slattenly witch ! nip up nud bolt intuh th' haks t' minute yah heard t' master's horse fit clatter up t' road.' For 'nud' she puts 'and,' and for 'haks' 'house.'

1848 (September).—Patrick Branwell Brontë died. Charlotte Brontë wrote : 'I myself, with painful, mournful joy, heard him praying softly in his dying moments ; and to the last prayer which my father offered up at his bedside, he added, "Amen." How unusual that word appeared from his lips, of course you, who did not know him, cannot conceive.' He was in the village just before his death. 'The removal of our only brother must necessarily be regarded by us rather in the light of a mercy than as a chastisement.'

1848 (29th October). — Charlotte Brontë writes : 'Emily's cold and cough are very

obstinate. I fear she has a pain in the chest, and I sometimes catch a shortness in her breathing, when she has moved at all quickly. She looks very, very thin and pale. Her reserved nature occasions me great uneasiness of mind. It is useless to question her ; you get no answers. It is still more useless to recommend remedies ; they are never adopted.'

On 2nd November she writes again : 'My sister Emily has something like a slow inflammation of the lungs. . . . She is a real stoic in illness : she neither seeks nor will accept sympathy. . . . When she is ill there seems to be no sunshine in the world for me. The tie of sister is near and dear indeed, and I think a certain harshness in her powerful and peculiar character only makes me cling to her more.'

1848 (22nd November).—We have a glimpse of Emily in her last days. Charlotte Brontë writes to W. S. Williams : 'The *North American Review* is worth reading. There is no mincing the matter there. What a bad set the Bells must be ! What appalling books they write ! To-day, as Emily appeared a little easier, I thought the *Review* would amuse her, so I read it aloud to her and Anne. As I sat between them at our quiet but now melancholy fireside,

I studied the two ferocious authors. Ellis, the "man of uncommon talents, but dogged, brutal, and morose," sat leaning back in his easy chair, drawing his impeded breath as he best could, and looking, alas! piteously pale and wasted; it is not his wont to laugh, but he smiled, half amused and half in scorn as he listened. Acton was sewing, no emotion ever stirs him to loquacity, so he only smiled too, dropping at the same time a single word of calm amazement to hear his character so darkly portrayed. I wonder what the reviewer would have thought of his own sagacity could he have beheld the pair as I did.' The critic, I may add, was E. P. Whipple, who, for many years, had a considerable reputation in America.

1848 (19th December).—Emily Brontë died, 'conscious, panting, reluctant.' Mr. Shorter has recovered two precious fragments from her Journal, one dated 30th July 1841, the other 31st July 1845. She had agreed with her sister Anne to write papers which each one was to open four years after. In 1841 she writes: 'It is Friday evening, near nine o'clock—wild rainy weather. I am seated in the dining-room, having just concluded tidying our desk boxes. Papa is in the parlour, aunt upstairs in her

room. . . . We are all stout and hearty. . . . A scheme is at present in agitation for setting us up in a school of our own ; as yet nothing is determined, but I hope and trust it may go on and prosper and answer our highest expectations. This day four years I wonder whether we shall still be dragging on in our present condition, or established to our hearts' content. Time will show. I guess that at the time appointed for the opening of this paper we, *i.e.* Charlotte, Anne, and I, shall be all merrily seated in our own sitting-room in some pleasant and flourishing seminary, having just gathered in for the midsummer ladyday. Our debts will be paid off, and we shall have cash in hand to a considerable amount. . . . And now I close, sending from far a exhortation of "Courage, boys ! courage," to exiled and harassed Anne, wishing she was here.'

The next extract is dated Haworth, Thursday, 31st July 1845 : 'My birthday—showery, breezy, cool. I am twenty-seven years old today. This morning Anne and I opened the papers we wrote four years since, on my twenty-third birthday. This paper we intend, if all be well, to open on my thirtieth—three years hence, in 1848.' She then summarises the

events of the years, and says : 'I should have mentioned that last summer the school scheme was revived in full vigour. We had prospectuses printed, despatched letters to all acquaintances imparting our plans, and did our little all ; but it was found no go. Now I don't desire a school at all, and none of us have any great longing for it. We have cash enough for our present wants, with a prospect of accumulation. We are all in decent health, only that papa has a complaint in his eyes, and with the exception of B., who, I hope, will be better and do better hereafter. I am quite contented for myself : not as idle as formerly, altogether as hearty, and having learnt to make the most of the present and long for the future with the fidgetiness that I cannot do all I wish ; seldom or ever troubled with nothing to do, and merely desiring that everybody could be as comfortable as myself and as undesponding, and then we should have a very tolerable world of it. . . . I have plenty of work on hand, and writing, and am altogether full of business. With best wishes for the whole house till 1848, July 30th, and as much longer as may be, I conclude, EMILY BRONTE.' 'As much longer as may be' —she had scarcely six months more.

We now see the extraordinary conditions under which this woman of genius did her work. Outside her own circle she had not a single friend. She never had a lover or any one who came near to be her lover. She was never outside of Yorkshire save during the Brussels experience, where she paid so dearly for the education which she hoped to turn into money. She had practically no acquaintances. The only people in Haworth she talked to were the servants and the visitors forced upon the home by the brother. Yet she loved life and shrank from death. Between her sister Anne and herself there was a tie of peculiar tenderness and closeness. She was passionately loved by Charlotte, who saw, nevertheless, something harsh in her temperament. There is no reason to suppose that she failed in affection to her father and her aunt, or to Branwell, though he may have wearied her out. She did the work of a servant in the house apparently with the greatest cheerfulness and efficiency. In the exercise of her imagination and in her love of nature she found peace. She refused to complain, and turned a front now calm, now defiant, to the most threatening circumstances.

II

The recognition of Emily Brontë's great powers did not come in her lifetime, and though authoritative voices have spoken, her place is even yet disputed. I have referred to the criticisms published at the time. *Jane Eyre* was originally published under the title *Jane Eyre: an Autobiography, edited by Currer Bell.* The word 'edited' was, of course, put in to negative the idea that Currer Bell was writing the history of her own life. But critics of the time misunderstood and were suspicious. The *Athenæum* in reviewing *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, said: '*Jane Eyre*, it will be recollected, was *edited* by Mr. Currer Bell. Here are two tales so nearly related to *Jane Eyre* in cast of thought, incident, and language as to excite some curiosity. All three might be the work of one hand—but the first issued remains the best.' It is to be feared that Mr. Newby sought some advantage from the suspicion. He advertised *Wuthering Heights* (leaving out *Agnes Grey*) along with Mrs. Crowe's *Night-side of Nature*, a work not quite forgotten. In his advertisement he quoted from the *Athenæum* and also from the *Spectator*, which said: 'The

work bears affinity to *Jane Eyre*.' He left out the pseudonyms of the sisters, Ellis and Acton Bell. Naturally they took umbrage at Haworth, though Newby published *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. One of the oddest criticisms of the time was by Douglas Jerrold: 'We strongly recommend all our readers to get this story. We promise them they never read anything like it before.' The *Atlas* said: 'It reminds us of *The Newlands*, by Banim. It is a colossal performance.' *Britannia* said: 'The author is a Salvator Rosa with his pen,' and the *Star* complacently remarked: 'It is not often that two such talented novels as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* are published in the same season.' But the critics unanimously objected to the subject. The *Spectator* said of *Wuthering Heights*: 'The success is not equal to the abilities of the writer, chiefly because the incidents and persons are too coarse and disagreeable to be attractive . . . with an immoral taint about them, and the villainy not leading to results sufficient to justify the elaborate pains taken in depicting it!' The first authoritative recognition came from Sydney Dobell, who wrote a paper in a short-lived periodical called the *Palladium*, full of just, eloquent, and

discriminating praise. This, which is by far the best of Sydney Dobell's generally too cloudy and ambitious criticisms, has been reprinted in his *Life and Letters*. Dobell, who was then twenty-six in 1850, insisted that *Wuthering Heights* was an early work of Charlotte Brontë, and spoke of 'those powers of insight, that instinctive obedience to the nature within her, and those occurrences of infallible inspiration which astound the critic in the young author of *Wuthering Heights*.' He also attributed *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* to the same pen. Dr. John Brown, in a letter to Lady Trevelyan dated 23rd June 1851, wrote: 'Have you read *Wuthering Heights* —carefully? I did so last week and think it a work of the highest genius. If it had been in the form of a Tragedy, it would have been the noblest bit of intensity and passion and human nature, in the rough and wild, since Shakespeare —it is far above *Jane Eyre*.' I may also quote Dante Rossetti, who writes in 1854 to William Allingham: 'I 've been greatly interested in *Wuthering Heights*, the first novel I 've read for an age, and the best (as regards power and sound style) for two ages, except *Sidonia*. But it is a fiend of a book—an incredible monster, combining all the stronger female tendencies from

Mrs. Browning to Mrs. Brownrigg. The action is laid in hell—only it seems places and people have English names there.' Matthew Arnold paid his tribute in the well-known lines :—

> '. . . she
> (How shall I sing her?) whose soul
> Knew no fellow for might,
> Passion, vehemence, grief,
> Daring, since Byron died,
> That world-famed son of fire—she, who sank
> Baffled, unknown, self-consumed;
> Whose too bold dying song
> Stirr'd, like a clarion-blast, my soul.'

From this it was evident that it was Emily Brontë's poetry rather than her prose that roused Arnold's enthusiasm. The work of Madame Duclaux (1883) is one of some real value, and the critical part is sound. But the noblest and the wisest praise is that given by Mr. Swinburne in his well-known work, *A Note on Charlotte Brontë*, and with a yet more deep and delicate insight in the Essay on Emily Brontë, which is published in his *Miscellanies*. The appreciation by Mrs. Humphry Ward, in her introduction to *Wuthering Heights*, is at once penetrating and generous.

III

How did this lonely girl come to write a book at once so great and yet so strange? What were her sources? Mrs. Humphry Ward, following Mr. Shorter, has suggested, without dogmatising, that Emily Brontë worked probably under influences from German literature. We know that the Brontës read *Blackwood* diligently, and Mrs. Humphry Ward has discovered that *Blackwood* published about 1839 certain translations including Tieck's *Pietro d'Abano*. It is barely possible that the story of the 'beautiful and deeply beloved Crescentia' might have been read with pleasure by Emily, but I can find no real likeness between it and *Wuthering Heights*. Mrs. Ward also suggests Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, but surely nothing could be more remote from the spirit of that book than the spirit of *Wuthering Heights*. Nor have I been able to find anything that justifies the suggestion that Hoffmann was an influence. The wild Irish stories which Mr. Brontë must have known at least have also been mentioned as possible influences, and I am strongly inclined to think that the Brontës must have known some of the books of Banim. As an Irishman, Mr. Brontë would relish those Rembrandtesque sketches of the Irish peasantry

which were intended to do for the Irish what Scott had done for the Scottish in his Waverley Novels. But this is all conjecture. On the other hand, we know that Charlotte Brontë, the most truthful of women, says that the materials for *Wuthering Heights* were gathered in Yorkshire. Her words must be quoted : 'Though her feeling for the people round was benevolent, intercourse with them she never sought ; nor, with very few exceptions, ever experienced. And yet she knew them : knew their ways, their language, their family histories ; she could hear of them with interest, and talk of them with detail, minute, graphic, and accurate ; but *with* them she rarely exchanged a word. Hence it ensued that what her mind had gathered of the real concerning them was too exclusively confined to those tragic and terrible traits of which, in listening to the secret annals of every rude vicinage, the memory is sometimes compelled to receive the impress. Her imagination, which was a spirit more sombre than sunny, more powerful than sportive, found in such traits materials whence it wrought creations like Heathcliff, like Earnshaw, like Catherine.' It is worthy of note that the contemporary critics objected to the book, not so much because it was improbable, as because

it was disagreeable. In fact the *Athenæum* admitted 'its truth to life in the remote nooks and corners of England.' The reviewer goes on to complain of the painful and exceptional subject, and especially of the descriptions of physical acts of cruelty. 'The brutal master of the lonely house on Wuthering Heights—a prison which might be pictured from life—has doubtless had his prototype in those ungenial and remote districts where human beings, like the trees, grow gnarled and dwarfed and distorted by the inclement climate; but he might have been indicated with far fewer touches, in place of so entirely filling the canvas that there is hardly a scene untainted by his presence.' The authors are warned against what is eccentric and unpleasant. 'Never was there a period in the history of Society when we English could so ill afford to dispense with sunshine.' The period of *Wuthering Heights* was in the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the same as some of the stories in Mr. Hardy's *Wessex Tales* and *A Group of Noble Dames*. Mr. Swinburne's words are decisive: 'The book is what it is because the author was what she was; this is the main and central fact to be remembered. Circumstances have modified the details; they have not implanted

the conception.' But every writer on the Brontës is brought up against the repellent figure of the miserable brother, Patrick Branwell Brontë. Most readers of Madame Duclaux's book have felt with Mr. Swinburne, that 'of that lamentable and contemptible caitiff—contemptible not so much for his commonplace debauchery as for his abject selfishness, his lying pretension, and his nerveless cowardice—there is far too much in this memoir.' But on close study it has to be admitted that this wretched creature had but too much influence on the minds of his sisters. Of their gifts he had not a particle. I have read many of his compositions, and there is scarcely a line in them that deserves to be printed. He comes into prominence because, unlike his sisters, he mingled but too freely with his neighbours, and with all who would make acquaintance with him. He was garrulous, boastful, coarse, and thankless. He spared his sisters nothing. He gave them in full detail the story of his debaucheries evidently with gross exaggeration so far as his own victories were concerned. They had to hear him, however reluctantly the listening might be, and it is plain that they believed the very worst. Of the monstrous theory that Branwell Brontë had anything to

do with the books of his sisters, I can scarcely trust myself to speak. Those who hold it outrage all decency in bringing, as they virtually do, a charge of the basest untruthfulness against Charlotte Brontë. Can any one read what she has written about her sisters and believe for a moment that the honours of their achievement can be divided? Happily we have the explicit statement of Charlotte Brontë, in her letter to W. S. Williams, announcing Branwell's death: 'My unhappy brother never knew what his sisters had done in literature—he was not aware that they had ever published a line. We could not tell him of our efforts for fear of causing him too deep a pang of remorse for his own time misspent, and talents misapplied.' It is not only possible, but likely, that much of Branwell's foul talk was put into the mouths of certain among his sisters' characters. In *Wuthering Heights* we read: 'Two words would comprehend my future—death and hell; existence after losing her would be hell. Yet I was a fool to fancy for a moment that she valued Edgar Linton's attachment more than mine. If he loved with all the force of his puny being, he would never love in eighty years as much as I could do in a day.' In one of Branwell's letters we find these words: 'My own life

without her would be hell. What can the so-called love of her wretched, sickly husband be to her compared with mine ? '

IV

But those who read with care the works of the three sisters will perceive that Branwell did not affect them in the same way. Charlotte Brontë, in one of her letters, contrasts Huntingdon (in *Wildfell Hall*), Rochester, and Heathcliff. She says that ' Heathcliff exemplifies the effects which a life of continual injustice and hard usage may produce on a natural, perverse, vindictive, and inexorable disposition, while Huntingdon is a sensual man, who never profits by experience, and Rochester lives for a time as too many other men live, but he does not like the degraded life, and is not happy in it.' The truth is that the more earthly side of passion is ignored by Emily. Anne Brontë takes facts as they are, and in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* gives a nearer rendering of Branwell and his associates as she conceived them than either of her sisters. Mr. Swinburne unerringly puts his finger on the place, and says that *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* ' as a study of utterly flaccid and invertebrate immorality bears signs of more faithful transcription from life than anything in *Jane*

Eyre or *Wuthering Heights*.' It is not easy to state the contrast without doing injustice to Charlotte and Anne Brontë, but it is a very real difference. Emily Brontë's mind was as virginal as that of Di Vernon. '*Os virginis habitumque gerens et virginis arma*.' To quote Mr. Swinburne again, the unique quality of *Wuthering Heights* is the special and distinctive character of its passion. 'The love which devours life itself, which devastates the present and desolates the future with unquenchable and raging fire, has nothing less pure in it than flame or sunlight. And this passionate and ardent chastity is utterly and unmistakably spontaneous and unconscious. Not till the story is ended, not till the effect of it has been thoroughly absorbed and digested, does the reader even perceive the simple and natural absence of any grosser element, any hint or suggestion of a baser alloy in the ingredients of its human emotion than in the splendour of lightning or the roll of a gathered wave. Then, as on issuing sometimes from the tumult of charging waters, he finds, with something of wonder, how absolutely pure and sweet was the element of living storm with which his own nature has been for a while made one ; not a grain in it of soiling sand, not a waif of clogging weed.'

It is the author's 'passionate and ardent chastity' that marks most deeply the character and the work of Emily Brontë.

V

For unquestionably her novel and the best of her poems are more unmistakably works of genius than even the books of Charlotte Brontë. *Wuthering Heights* is, from beginning to end, a pure and purifying tragedy. It excels in its pictures of dreamland and delirium. The writer is most secure when she is treading the path of a single hair. With the ordinary things that make up the personality of an author she has nothing to do. The only quotation I remember in her writings is very characteristic :—

> 'It was far in the night and the bairnies grat,
> The mither beneath the mools heard that.'

It is very hard to extract any lessons from the book, and the preferences expressed in it are simple and enduring. Above all are the passion for liberty and the belief that death makes peace. It is dangerous to conclude that a writer is ignorant of certain facts and relations of life. She is not ignorant ; she could hardly be ignorant, but she rises above such things.

As to her personal faith or unfaith, many

questions have been asked, and will continue to be asked. The mere fact that she was apparently unconscious of any jarring between the very feeble and conventional *Agnes Grey* and her own grand and daring work shows, I think, that she had no disposition to take up arms against the prevailing faith. She was apparently quite satisfied in her round of duties and conformities, though she would suffer no one to impose upon her fresh yokes. It is amazing that the critics of the time could have believed that the little tale of the mild affection of a curate for a governess, or rather of a governess for a curate, and their safe establishment in a parsonage, with three hundred pounds a year, could have come from the same hand as that which drew Heathcliff and Catherine. In her poems she speaks at times the language of her surroundings. But now that her life is closed by death and rounded by the past, it is evident that her strong vivid personality found rest in a form of stoicism. She wrote nothing after *Wuthering Heights*, save the fine lines, 'No coward soul in mine.' This has been interpreted by good critics as signifying that life and sin and punishment end with death, and with every soul being absorbed in the infinite. But Mr. Swinburne is of another mind. He says :

'Belief in the personal or positive immortality of the individual and indivisible spirit was not apparently, in her case, swallowed up or nullified or made nebulous by any doctrine or dream of simple reabsorption into some indefinite infinity of eternal life. So at least it seems to me that her last ardent confession of dauntless and triumphant faith should properly be read, however capable certain phrases in it may seem of the vaguer and more impersonal interpretation.' It is obvious that she was attracted neither by the rude fervours of the Yorkshire chapels nor by the bigotry of the clergy, and there we must leave it. Mr. R. B. Haldane says, 'It contains the teaching of Aristotle transferred from the abstract to the concrete.'

Of the verses which follow a few are entitled to rank with the finest of English lyrics. The best are bursts of irrepressible feeling, the expression of a single overruling mood. Many of those printed for the first time were written in connection with that unmapped country the Gondaland, about which the sisters wrote and talked so much. Among the noblest lyrics are 'Remembrance,' 'Death,' 'The Visionary,' and 'A Little While.' The last stands alone for its vehement nostalgia. Mrs. Humphry Ward calls attention more than once to the extraor-

dinary fact that this poem was written by a girl of sixteen. It is true Charlotte Brontë says that the poem was 'written in her sixteenth year.' But this is manifestly an error. Born on 30th July 1818 Emily when she went to Roe Head on the 29th July 1835 was just completing her seventeenth year. Even so the achievement would be very remarkable. But Madame Duclaux, who had a manuscript copy of the poems in which Emily has written the dates, assigns the piece to the Brussels period, and this is much more probable. The 'alien firelight' suits Brussels much better than the Yorkshire hearth of 'good, kind' Miss Wooler. In fact the literary genius of the Brontës was comparatively late in developing. Though they wrote incessantly from their earliest days, none of them wrote anything of importance till after twenty, and the early stories of Charlotte show no signs of promise.

What would Emily have been if life had been kind? Charlotte's answer to that question will be found in *Shirley*. Shirley Keeldar was, Charlotte Brontë said, what Emily might have been had she been blessed in health and prosperity.

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL.

EARLY POEMS

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POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1846

I

FAITH AND DESPONDENCY

'THE winter wind is loud and wild,
Come close to me, my darling child;
Forsake thy books, and mateless play;
And, while the night is gathering grey,
We 'll talk its pensive hours away;—

'Iernë, round our sheltered hall
November's gusts unheeded call;
Not one faint breath can enter here
Enough to wave my daughter's hair,
And I am glad to watch the blaze
Glance from her eyes, with mimic rays,
To feel her cheek, so softly pressed,
In happy quiet on my breast.

'But, yet, even this tranquillity
Brings bitter, restless thoughts to me;
And, in the red fire's cheerful glow,
I think of deep glens, blocked with snow;

I dream of moor, and misty hill,
Where evening closes dark and chill;
For, lone, among the mountains cold,
Lie those that I have loved of old.
And my heart aches, in hopeless pain,
Exhausted with repinings vain,
That I shall greet them ne'er again!'

'Father, in early infancy,
When you were far beyond the sea,
Such thoughts were tyrants over me!
I often sat, for hours together,
Through the long nights of angry weather,
Raised on my pillow, to descry
The dim moon struggling in the sky;
Or, with strained ear, to catch the shock,
Of rock with wave, and wave with rock;
So would I fearful vigil keep,
And, all for listening, never sleep.
But this world's life has much to dread,
Not so, my father, with the dead.

'Oh! not for them, should we despair,
The grave is drear, but they are not there:
Their dust is mingled with the sod,
Their happy souls are gone to God!
You told me this, and yet you sigh,
And murmur that your friends must die.
Ah! my dear father, tell me why?
For, if your former words were true,
How useless would such sorrow be;

As wise, to mourn the seed which grew
Unnoticed on its parent tree,
Because it fell in fertile earth,
And sprang up to a glorious birth—
Struck deep its root, and lifted high
Its green boughs in the breezy sky.

'But, I 'll not fear, I will not weep
For those whose bodies rest in sleep,—
I know there is a blessed shore,
Opening its ports for me and mine ;
And, gazing Time's wide waters o'er,
I weary for that land divine,
Where we were born, where you and I
Shall meet our dearest, when we die ;
From suffering and corruption free,
Restored into the Deity.'

'Well hast thou spoken, sweet, trustful child !
And wiser than thy sire ;
And worldly tempests, raging wild,
Shall strengthen thy desire—
Thy fervent hope, through storm and foam,
Through wind and ocean's roar,
To reach, at last, the eternal home,
The steadfast, changeless shore ! '

II

STARS

Ah! why, because the dazzling sun
  Restored our Earth to joy,
Have you departed, every one,
  And left a desert sky?

All through the night, your glorious eyes
  Were gazing down in mine,
And, with a full heart's thankful sighs,
  I blessed that watch divine.

I was at peace, and drank your beams
  As they were life to me;
And revelled in my changeful dreams,
  Like petrel on the sea.

Thought followed thought, star followed star
  Through boundless regions, on;
While one sweet influence, near and far,
  Thrilled through, and proved us one!

Why did the morning dawn to break
  So great, so pure, a spell;
And scorch with fire the tranquil cheek,
  Where your cool radiance fell?

Blood-red, he rose, and, arrow-straight,
His fierce beams struck my brow;
The soul of nature sprang, elate,
But *mine* sank sad and low!

My lids closed down, yet through their veil
I saw him, blazing, still,
And steep in gold the misty dale,
And flash upon the hill.

I turned me to the pillow, then,
To call back night, and see
Your worlds of solemn light, again,
Throb with my heart, and me!

It would not do—the pillow glowed,
And glowed both roof and floor;
And birds sang loudly in the wood,
And fresh winds shook the door;

The curtains waved, the wakened flies
Were murmuring round my room,
Imprisoned there, till I should rise,
And give them leave to roam.

Oh, stars, and dreams, and gentle night;
Oh, night and stars, return!
And hide me from the hostile light
That does not warm, but burn;

That drains the blood of suffering men ;
Drinks tears, instead of dew ;
Let me sleep through his blinding reign,
And only wake with you !

III

THE PHILOSOPHER

ENOUGH of thought, philosopher!
Too long hast thou been dreaming
Unlightened, in this chamber drear,
While summer's sun is beaming!
Space-sweeping soul, what sad refrain
Concludes thy musing once again?

'Oh, for the time when I shall sleep
Without identity.
And never care how rain may steep,
Or snow may cover me!
No promised heaven, these wild desires
Could all, or half fulfil;
No threatened hell, with quenchless fires,
Subdue this quenchless will!'

'So said I, and still say the same;
Still, to my death, will say—
Three gods, within this little frame,
Are warring night and day;
Heaven could not hold them all, and yet
They all are held in me;
And must be mine till I forget
My present entity!

Oh, for the time, when in my breast
Their struggles will be o'er!
Oh, for the day, when I shall rest,
And never suffer more!'

'I saw a spirit, standing, man,
Where thou dost stand—an hour ago,
And round his feet three rivers ran,
Of equal depth, and equal flow—
A golden stream—and one like blood;
And one like sapphire seemed to be;
But, where they joined their triple flood
It tumbled in an inky sea.
The spirit sent his dazzling gaze
Down through that ocean's gloomy night;
Then, kindling all, with sudden blaze,
The glad deep sparkled wide and bright—
White as the sun, far, far more fair
Than its divided sources were!'

'And even for that spirit, seer,
I've watched and sought my lifetime long;
Sought him in heaven, hell, earth, and air,
An endless search, and always wrong.
Had I but seen his glorious eye
Once light the clouds that 'wilder me,
I ne'er had raised this coward cry
To cease to think, and cease to be;

I ne'er had called oblivion blest,
  Nor stretching eager hands to death,
Implored to change for senseless rest
  This sentient soul, this living breath—
Oh, let me die—that power and will
  Their cruel strife may close;
And conquered good and conquering ill
  Be lost in one repose!'

The date of this poem as given by Miss Robinson is October 1845.—Ed.

IV

REMEMBRANCE

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me ;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy ;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine ;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain ;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

The date of this poem as given by Miss Robinson is March 1845.—Ed.

V

A DEATH-SCENE

'O Day! he cannot die
When thou so fair art shining!
O Sun, in such a glorious sky,
So tranquilly declining;

'He cannot leave thee now,
While fresh west winds are blowing,
And all around his youthful brow
Thy cheerful light is glowing!

'Edward, awake, awake—
The golden evening gleams
Warm and bright on Arden's lake—
Arouse thee from thy dreams!

'Beside thee, on my knee,
My dearest friend, I pray
That thou, to cross the eternal sea,
Wouldst yet one hour delay:

'I hear its billows roar—
I see them foaming high;
But no glimpse of a further shore
Has blest my straining eye.

'Believe not what they urge
Of Eden isles beyond;
Turn back, from that tempestuous surge,
To thy own native land.

'It is not death, but pain
That struggles in thy breast—
Nay, rally, Edward, rouse again;
I cannot let thee rest!'

One long look, that sore reproved me
For the woe I could not bear—
One mute look of suffering moved me
To repent my useless prayer:

And, with sudden check, the heaving
Of distraction passed away;
Not a sign of further grieving
Stirred my soul that awful day.

Paled, at length, the sweet sun setting;
Sunk to peace the twilight breeze:
Summer dews fell softly, wetting
Glen, and glade, and silent trees.

Then his eyes began to weary,
Weighed beneath a mortal sleep;
And their orbs grew strangely dreary,
Clouded, even as they would weep.

But they wept not, but they changed not,
Never moved, and never closed ;
Troubled still, and still they ranged not—
Wandered not, nor yet reposed !

So I knew that he was dying—
Stooped, and raised his languid head ;
Felt no breath, and heard no sighing,
So I knew that he was dead.

VI

SONG

THE linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells
That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast;
The wild birds raise their brood;
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
Have left her solitude!

I ween, that when the grave's dark wall
Did first her form retain,
They thought their hearts could ne'er recall
The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow
Unchecked through future years;
But where is all their anguish now,
And where are all their tears?

Well, let them fight for honour's breath,
Or pleasure's shade pursue—
The dweller in the land of death
Is changed and careless too.

And, if their eyes should watch and weep
  Till sorrow's source were dry,
She would not, in her tranquil sleep,
  Return a single sigh!

Blow, west-wind, by the lonely mound,
  And murmur, summer-streams—
There is no need of other sound
  To soothe my lady's dreams.

VII

ANTICIPATION

How beautiful the earth is still,
To thee—how full of happiness!
How little fraught with real ill,
Or unreal phantoms of distress!
How spring can bring thee glory, yet,
And summer win thee to forget
December's sullen time!
Why dost thou hold the treasure fast,
Of youth's delight, when youth is past,
And thou art near thy prime?

When those who were thy own compeers,
Equals in fortune and in years,
Have seen their morning melt in tears,
To clouded, smileless day;
Blest, had they died untried and young,
Before their hearts went wandering wrong,—
Poor slaves, subdued by passions strong,
A weak and helpless prey!

'Because, I hoped while they enjoyed,
And by fulfilment, hope destroyed;
As children hope, with trustful breast,
I waited bliss—and cherished rest.
A thoughtful spirit taught me soon,
That we must long till life be done;

That every phase of earthly joy
Must always fade, and always cloy:

'This I foresaw—and would not chase
The fleeting treacheries;
But, with firm foot and tranquil face,
Held backward from that tempting race,
Gazed o'er the sands the waves efface
To the enduring seas—
There cast my anchor of desire
Deep in unknown eternity;
Nor ever let my spirit tire,
With looking for *what is to be*!

'It is hope's spell that glorifies,
Like youth, to my maturer eyes,
All Nature's million mysteries,
The fearful and the fair—
Hope soothes me in the griefs I know;
She lulls my pain for others' woe,
And makes me strong to undergo
What I am born to bear.

'Glad comforter! will I not brave,
Unawed, the darkness of the grave?
Nay, smile to hear Death's billows rave—
Sustained, my guide, by thee?
The more unjust seems present fate,
The more my spirit swells elate,
Strong, in thy strength, to anticipate
Rewarding destiny!

VIII

THE PRISONER

A FRAGMENT

In the dungeon-crypts idly did I stray,
Reckless of the lives wasting there away;
'Draw the ponderous bars! open, Warder stern!'
He dared not say me nay—the hinges harshly turn.

'Our guests are darkly lodged,' I whisper'd, gazing through
The vault, whose grated eye showed heaven more grey than blue;
(This was when glad Spring laughed in awaking pride);
'Aye, darkly lodged enough!' returned my sullen guide.

Then, God forgive my youth; forgive my careless tongue;
I scoffed, as the chill chains on the damp flagstones rung:
'Confined in triple walls, art thou so much to fear,
That we must bind thee down and clench thy fetters here?'

The captive raised her face; it was as soft and mild
As sculptured marble saint, or slumbering unwean'd child;
It was so soft and mild, it was so sweet and fair,
Pain could not trace a line, nor grief a shadow there!

The captive raised her hand and pressed it to her brow;
'I have been struck,' she said, 'and I am suffering now;
Yet these are little worth, your bolts and irons strong;
And, were they forged in steel, they could not hold me long.'

Hoarse laughed the jailor grim: 'Shall I be won to hear;
Dost think, fond, dreaming wretch, that *I* shall grant thy prayer?
Or, better still, wilt melt my master's heart with groans?
Ah! sooner might the sun thaw down these granite stones.

'My master's voice is low, his aspect bland and kind,
But hard as hardest flint the soul that lurks behind;

And I am rough and rude, yet not more rough to see
Than is the hidden ghost that has its home in me.'

About her lips there played a smile of almost scorn.
'My friend,' she gently said, 'you have not heard me mourn;
When you my kindred's lives, *my* lost life, can restore,
Then may I weep and sue,—but never, friend, before!

'Still, let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear
Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair;
A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

'He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs,
With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars.
Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

'Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,
When Joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears.

When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunder-storm.

'But, first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends;
The struggle of distress, and fierce impatience ends;
Mute music soothes my breast—unuttered harmony,
That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

'Then dawns the Invisible; the Unseen its truth reveals;
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels:
Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour found,
Measuring the gulf, it stoops and dares the final bound.

'Oh! dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again;
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

'Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less;
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald death, the vision is divine!'

She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned to go—
We had no further power to work the captive woe:
Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man had given
A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

IX

HOPE

Hope was but a timid friend;
  She sat without the grated den,
Watching how my fate would tend,
  Even as selfish-hearted men.

She was cruel in her fear;
  Through the bars one dreary day,
I looked out to see her there,
  And she turned her face away!

Like a false guard, false watch keeping,
  Still, in strife, she whispered peace;
She would sing while I was weeping;
  If I listened, she would cease.

False she was, and unrelenting;
  When my last joys strewed the ground,
Even Sorrow saw, repenting,
  Those sad relics scattered round;

Hope, whose whisper would have given
  Balm to all my frenzied pain,
Stretched her wings, and soared to heaven,
  Went, and ne'er returned again!

X

A DAY DREAM

On a sunny brae alone I lay
One summer afternoon ;
It was the marriage-time of May,
With her young lover, June.

From her mother's heart seemed loath to part
That queen of bridal charms,
But her father smiled on the fairest child
He ever held in his arms.

The trees did wave their plumy crests,
The glad birds carolled clear ;
And I, of all the wedding guests,
Was only sullen there !

There was not one but wished to shun
My aspect void of cheer ;
The very grey rocks, looking on,
Asked, 'What do you here?'

And I could utter no reply ;
In sooth, I did not know
Why I had brought a clouded eye
To greet the general glow.

So, resting on a heathy bank,
I took my heart to me;
And we together sadly sank
Into a reverie.

We thought, 'When winter comes again,
Where will these bright things be?
All vanished, like a vision vain,
An unreal mockery!

'The birds that now so blithely sing,
Through deserts, frozen dry,
Poor spectres of the perished spring,
In famished troops will fly.

'And why should we be glad at all?
The leaf is hardly green,
Before a token of its fall
Is on the surface seen!'

Now, whether it were really so
I never could be sure;
But as in fit of peevish woe,
I stretched me on the moor,

A thousand thousand gleaming fires
Seemed kindling in the air;
A thousand thousand silvery lyres
Resounded far and near:

Methought, the very breath I breathed
Was full of sparks divine,
And all my heather-couch was wreathed
By that celestial shine!

And, while the wide earth echoing rung
To that strange minstrelsy,
The little glittering spirits sung,
Or seemed to sing, to me:

'O mortal! mortal! let them die;
Let time and tears destroy,
That we may overflow the sky
With universal joy!

'Let grief distract the sufferer's breast,
And night obscure his way;
They hasten him to endless rest,
And everlasting day.

'To thee the world is like a tomb,
A desert's naked shore;
To us, in unimagined bloom,
It brightens more and more!

'And, could we lift the veil, and give
One brief glimpse to thine eye,
Thou wouldst rejoice for those that live,
Because they live to die.'

The music ceased ; the noonday dream,
  Like dream of night, withdrew ;
But Fancy, still, will sometimes deem
  Her fond creation true.

The date of this poem as given by Miss Robinson is March 5th, 1844.—Ed.

XI

TO IMAGINATION

When weary with the long day's care,
And earthly change from pain to pain,
And lost, and ready to despair,
Thy kind voice calls me back again,
Oh, my true friend! I am not lone,
While thou canst speak with such a tone!

So hopeless is the world without;
The world within I doubly prize;
Thy world, where guile, and hate, and doubt,
And cold suspicion never rise;
Where thou, and I, and Liberty,
Have undisputed sovereignty.

What matters it, that all around
Danger, and guilt, and darkness lie,
If but within our bosom's bound
We hold a bright, untroubled sky,
Warm with ten thousand mingled rays
Of suns that know no winter days?

Reason, indeed, may oft complain
For Nature's sad reality,
And tell the suffering heart how vain
Its cherished dreams must always be;
And Truth may rudely trample down
The flowers of Fancy, newly-blown:

But thou art ever there, to bring
  The hovering vision back, and breathe
New glories o'er the blighted spring,
  And call a lovelier Life from Death,
And whisper, with a voice divine,
Of real worlds, as bright as thine.

I trust not to thy phantom bliss,
  Yet, still, in evening's quiet hour,
With never-failing thankfulness,
  I welcome thee, Benignant Power,
Sure solacer of human cares,
And sweeter hope, when hope despairs!

XII

HOW CLEAR SHE SHINES

How clear she shines! How quietly
I lie beneath her guardian light;
While heaven and earth are whispering me,
'To-morrow, wake, but dream to-night.'
Yes, Fancy, come, my Fairy love!
These throbbing temples softly kiss;
And bend my lonely couch above,
And bring me rest, and bring me bliss.

The world is going; dark world, adieu!
Grim world, conceal thee till the day;
The heart thou canst not all subdue
Must still resist, if thou delay!

Thy love I will not, will not share;
Thy hatred only wakes a smile;
Thy griefs may wound—thy wrongs may tear,
But, oh, thy lies shall ne'er beguile!
While gazing on the stars that glow
Above me, in that stormless sea,
I long to hope that all the woe
Creation knows, is held in thee!

And this shall be my dream to-night;
I 'll think the heaven of glorious spheres
Is rolling on its course of light
In endless bliss, through endless years;
I 'll think, there 's not one world above,
Far as these straining eyes can see,
Where Wisdom ever laughed at Love,
Or Virtue crouched to Infamy;

Where, writhing 'neath the strokes of Fate,
The mangled wretch was forced to smile;
To match his patience 'gainst her hate,
His heart rebellious all the while.
Where Pleasure still will lead to wrong,
And helpless Reason warn in vain;
And Truth is weak, and Treachery strong;
And Joy the surest path to Pain;
And Peace, the lethargy of Grief;
And Hope, a phantom of the soul;
And Life, a labour, void and brief;
And Death, the despot of the whole!

XIII

SYMPATHY

THERE should be no despair for you
  While nightly stars are burning,
While evening pours its silent dew,
  And sunshine gilds the morning.
There should be no despair—though tears
  May flow down like a river:
Are not the best beloved of years
  Around your heart for ever?

They weep, you weep, it must be so;
  Winds sigh as you are sighing,
And winter sheds its grief in snow
  Where Autumn's leaves are lying:
Yet, these revive, and from their fate
  Your fate cannot be parted:
Then, journey on, if not elate,
  Still *never* broken-hearted!

XIV

PLEAD FOR ME

Oh, thy bright eyes must answer now,
When Reason, with a scornful brow,
Is mocking at my overthrow!
Oh, thy sweet tongue must plead for me
And tell why I have chosen thee!

Stern Reason is to judgement come,
Arrayed in all her forms of gloom:
Wilt thou, my advocate, be dumb?
No, radiant angel, speak and say
Why I did cast the world away.

Why I have persevered to shun
The common paths that others run;
And on a strange road journeyed on,
Heedless, alike of wealth and power—
Of glory's wreath and pleasure's flower.

These, once, indeed, seemed Beings Divine;
And they, perchance, heard vows of mine,
And saw my offerings on their shrine;
But careless gifts are seldom prized,
And *mine* were worthily despised.

So, with a ready heart, I swore
To seek their altar-stone no more;
And gave my spirit to adore
Thee, ever-present, phantom thing—
My slave, my comrade, and my king.

A slave, because I rule thee still;
Incline thee to my changeful will,
And make thy influence good or ill:
A comrade, for by day and night
Thou art my intimate delight,—

My darling pain that wounds and sears,
And wrings a blessing out from tears
By deadening me to earthly cares;
And yet, a king, though Prudence well
Have taught thy subject to rebel.

And am I wrong to worship where
Faith cannot doubt, nor hope despair,
Since my own soul can grant my prayer?
Speak, God of visions, plead for me,
And tell why I have chosen thee!

XV

SELF-INTERROGATION

'The evening passes fast away,
'Tis almost time to rest;
What thoughts has left the vanished day,
What feelings in thy breast?'

'The vanished day? It leaves a sense
Of labour hardly done;
Of little gained with vast expense—
A sense of grief alone!

'Time stands before the door of Death,
Upbraiding bitterly;
And Conscience, with exhaustless breath,
Pours black reproach on me:

'And though I've said that Conscience lies,
And Time should Fate condemn;
Still, sad Repentance clouds my eyes,
And makes me yield to them!'

'Then art thou glad to seek repose?
Art glad to leave the sea,
And anchor all thy weary woes
In calm Eternity?

'Nothing regrets to see thee go—
Not one voice sobs 'farewell';
And where thy heart has suffered so,
Canst thou desire to dwell?'

'Alas! the countless links are strong
That bind us to our clay;
The loving spirit lingers long,
And would not pass away!

'And rest is sweet, when laurelled fame
Will crown the soldier's crest;
But a brave heart, with a tarnished name,
Would rather fight than rest.'

'Well, thou hast fought for many a year,
Hast fought thy whole life through,
Hast humbled Falsehood, trampled Fear;
What is there left to do?'

''Tis true, this arm has hotly striven,
Has dared what few would dare;
Much have I done, and freely given,
But little learnt to bear!'

'Look on the grave where thou must sleep,
Thy last, and strongest foe;
It is endurance not to weep
If that repose seem woe.

'The long war closing in defeat—
Defeat serenely borne,—
Thy midnight rest may still be sweet,
And break in glorious morn!'

XVI

DEATH

DEATH ! that struck when I was most confiding
In my certain faith of joy to be—
Strike again, Time's withered branch dividing
From the fresh root of Eternity !

Leaves, upon Time's branch, were growing brightly,
Full of sap, and full of silver dew ;
Birds beneath its shelter gathered nightly ;
Daily round its flowers the wild bees flew.

Sorrow passed, and plucked the golden blossom ;
Guilt stripped off the foliage in its pride ;
But, within its parent's kindly bosom,
Flowed for ever Life's restoring tide.

Little mourned I for the parted gladness,
For the vacant nest and silent song—
Hope was there, and laughed me out of sadness ;
Whispering, 'Winter will not linger long !'

And, behold ! with tenfold increase blessing,
Spring adorned the beauty-burdened spray ;
Wind and rain and fervent heat, caressing,
Lavished glory on that second May !

High it rose—no winged grief could sweep it;
Sin was scared to distance with its shine;
Love, and its own life, had power to keep it
From all wrong—from every blight but thine!

Cruel Death! The young leaves droop and languish;
Evening's gentle air may still restore—
No! the morning sunshine mocks my anguish—
Time, for me, must never blossom more!

Strike it down, that other boughs may flourish
Where that perished sapling used to be;
Thus, at least, its mouldering corpse will nourish
That from which it sprung—Eternity.

The date of this poem as given by Miss Robinson is 1843.—Ed.

XVII

STANZAS TO ——

WELL, some may hate, and some may scorn,
And some may quite forget thy name;
But my sad heart must ever mourn
Thy ruined hopes, thy blighted fame!
'Twas thus I thought, an hour ago,
Even weeping o'er that wretch's woe;
One word turned back my gushing tears,
And lit my altered eye with sneers.
Then, 'Bless the friendly dust,' I said,
'That hides thy unlamented head!
Vain as thou wert, and weak as vain,
The slave of Falsehood, Pride, and Pain—
My heart has nought akin to thine;
Thy soul is powerless over mine.'
But these were thoughts that vanished too;
Unwise, unholy, and untrue:
Do I despise the timid deer,
Because his limbs are fleet with fear?
Or, would I mock the wolf's death-howl,
Because his form is gaunt and foul?
Or, hear with joy the leveret's cry,
Because it cannot bravely die?
No! Then above his memory
Let Pity's heart as tender be;
Say, 'Earth, lie lightly on that breast,
And, kind Heaven, grant that spirit rest!'

XVIII

HONOUR'S MARTYR

The moon is full this winter night;
The stars are clear though few;
And every window glistens bright
With leaves of frozen dew.

The sweet moon through your lattice gleams,
And lights your room like day;
And there you pass, in happy dreams,
The peaceful hours away!

While I, with effort hardly quelling
The anguish in my breast,
Wander about the silent dwelling,
And cannot think of rest.

The old clock in the gloomy hall
Ticks on, from hour to hour;
And every time its measured call
Seems lingering slow and slower:

And, oh, how slow that keen-eyed star
Has tracked the chilly grey!
What, watching yet! how very far
The morning lies away!

Without your chamber door I stand ;
  Love, are you slumbering still?
My cold heart, underneath my hand,
  Has almost ceased to thrill.

Bleak, bleak the east wind sobs and sighs,
  And drowns the turret bell,
Whose sad note, undistinguished, dies
  Unheard, like my farewell!

To-morrow, Scorn will blight my name,
  And Hate will trample me,
Will load me with a coward's shame—
  A traitor's perjury.

False friends will launch their covert sneers ;
  True friends will wish me dead ;
And I shall cause the bitterest tears
  That you have ever shed.

The dark deeds of my outlawed race
  Will then like virtues shine ;
And men will pardon their disgrace,
  Beside the guilt of mine.

For, who forgives the accursed crime
  Of dastard treachery?
Rebellion, in its chosen time,
  May Freedom's champion be ;

Revenge may stain a righteous sword,
  It may be just to slay ;
But, traitor, traitor,—from *that* word
  All true breasts shrink away !

Oh, I would give my heart to death,
  To keep my honour fair ;
Yet, I 'll not give my inward faith
  My honour's *name* to spare !

Not even to keep your priceless love,
  Dare I, Beloved, deceive ;
This treason should the future prove,
  Then, only then, believe !

I know the path I ought to go ;
  I follow fearlessly,
Inquiring not what deeper woe
  Stern duty stores for me.

So foes pursue, and cold allies
  Mistrust me, every one :
Let me be false in others' eyes,
  If faithful in my own.

XIX

STANZAS

I'LL not weep that thou art going to leave me,
There 's nothing lovely here ;
And doubly will the dark world grieve me,
While thy heart suffers there.

I 'll not weep, because the summer's glory
Must always end in gloom ;
And, follow out the happiest story—
It closes with a tomb !

And I am weary of the anguish
Increasing winters bear ;
Weary to watch the spirit languish
Through years of dead despair.

So, if a tear, when thou art dying,
Should haply fall from me,
It is but that my soul is sighing,
To go and rest with thee.

XX

MY COMFORTER

Well hast thou spoken, and yet not taught
A feeling strange or new;
Thou hast but roused a latent thought,
A cloud-closed beam of sunshine brought
To gleam in open view.

Deep down, concealed within my soul,
That light lies hid from men;
Yet glows unquenched—though shadows roll,
Its gentle ray cannot control—
About the sullen den.

Was I not vexed, in these gloomy ways
To walk alone so long?
Around me, wretches uttering praise,
Or howling o'er their hopeless days,
And each with Frenzy's tongue;—

A brotherhood of misery,
Their smiles as sad as sighs;
Whose madness daily maddened me,
Distorting into agony
The bliss before my eyes!

So stood I, in Heaven's glorious sun,
And in the glare of Hell;
My spirit drank a mingled tone,
Of seraph's song, and demon's moan;
What my soul bore, my soul alone
Within itself may tell!

Like a soft air above a sea,
Tossed by the tempest's stir;
A thaw-wind, melting quietly
The snow-drift on some wintry lea;
No: what sweet thing resembles thee,
My thoughtful Comforter?

And yet a little longer speak,
Calm this resentful mood;
And while the savage heart grows meek,
For other token do not seek,
But let the tear upon my cheek
Evince my gratitude!

XXI

THE OLD STOIC

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn:

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, 'Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!'

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Reprinted from 'Selections from the Literary Remains of Ellis and Acton Bell,' first published in the 1850 Edition of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*.

SELECTIONS FROM POEMS BY ELLIS BELL[1]

It would not have been difficult to compile a volume out of the papers left by my sisters, had I, in making the selection, dismissed from my consideration the scruples and the wishes of those whose thoughts these papers held. But this was impossible: an influence, stronger than could be exercised by any motive of expediency, necessarily regulated the selection. I have, then, culled from the mass only a little poem here and there. The whole makes but a tiny nosegay, and the colour and the perfume of the flowers are not such as fit them for festal uses.

It has been already said that my sisters wrote much in childhood and girlhood. Usually it seems a sort of injustice to expose in print the crude thoughts of the unripe mind, the rude efforts of the unpractised hand: yet I venture to give three little poems of my sister Emily's, written in her sixteenth year, because they illustrate a point in her character.

At that period she was sent to school. Her previous life, with the exception of a single half-year, had been passed in the absolute retirement of a village parsonage, amongst the hills bordering Yorkshire and Lancashire. The scenery of these hills is not grand—it is not romantic; it is scarcely striking. Long low moors, with heath, shut in little valleys, where a stream waters, here and there, a fringe of stunted copse. Mills and scattered cottages chase romance from these valleys; it is only higher up,

[1] First published in the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*

deep in amongst the ridges of the moors, that Imagination can find rest for the sole of her foot; and even if she finds it there, she must be a solitude-loving raven, no gentle dove. If she demand beauty to inspire her, she must bring it inborn: these moors are too stern to yield to any product so delicate. The eye of the gazer must itself brim with a 'purple light,' intense enough to perpetuate the brief flower-flush of August on the heather, or the sunset-smile of June; out of his heart must well the freshness, that in latter spring and early summer brightens the bracken, nurtures the moss, and cherishes the starry flowers that spangle for a few weeks the pasture of the moor-sheep. Unless that light and freshness are innate and self-sustained, the drear prospect of a Yorkshire moor will be found as barren of poetic as of agricultural interest: where the love of wild nature is strong, the locality will perhaps be clung to with the more passionate constancy, because from the hill-lover's self comes half its charm.

My sister loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her; out of a sullen hollow in a livid hill-side her mind could make an Eden. She found in the bleak solitude many and dear delights; and not the least and best loved was—liberty. Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils; without it, she perished. The change from her own home to a school, and from her own very noiseless, very secluded, but unrestricted and inartificial mode of life, to one of disciplined routine (though under the kindliest auspices) was what she failed in enduring. Her nature proved here too strong for her fortitude. Every morning when she woke, the vision of home and the moors rushed on her, and darkened and saddened the day that lay before her. Nobody knew what ailed her but me—I knew only too well. In this

struggle her health was quickly broken: her white face, attenuated form, and failing strength, threatened rapid decline. I felt in my heart she would die, if she did not go home, and with this conviction obtained her recall. She had only been three months at school: and it was some years before the experiment of sending her from home was again ventured on. After the age of twenty, having meantime studied alone with diligence and perseverance, she went with me to an establishment on the continent; the same suffering and conflict ensued, heightened by the strong recoil of her upright, heretic and English spirit from the gentle Jesuitry of the foreign and Roman system. Once more she seemed sinking, but this time she rallied through the mere force of resolution: with inward remorse and shame she looked back on her former failure, and resolved to conquer in this second ordeal. She did conquer: but it cost her dear. She was never happy till she carried her hard-won knowledge back to the remote English village, the old parsonage house, and desolate Yorkshire hills. A very few years more, and she looked her last on those hills, and breathed her last in that house, and under the aisle of that obscure village church found her last resting-place. Merciful was the decree that spared her when she was a stranger in a strange land, and guarded her dying bed with kindred love and congenial constancy.

The following pieces were composed at twilight, in the schoolroom, when the leisure of the evening play-hour brought back in full tide the thought of home.

CURRER BELL.

POSTHUMOUS POEMS

EDITED BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË

I

A LITTLE while, a little while,
The weary task is put away,
And I can sing and I can smile,
Alike, while I have holiday.

Where wilt thou go, my harassed heart—
What thought, what scene invites thee now?
What spot, or near or far apart,
Has rest for thee, my weary brow?

There is a spot, 'mid barren hills,
Where winter howls, and driving rain;
But, if the dreary tempest chills,
There is a light that warms again.

The house is old, the trees are bare,
Moonless above bends twilight's dome;
But what on earth is half so dear—
So longed for—as the hearth of home?

The mute bird sitting on the stone,
  The dank moss dripping from the wall,
The thorn-trees gaunt, the walks o'ergrown,
  I love them—how I love them all!

Still, as I mused, the naked room,
  The alien firelight died away;
And from the midst of cheerless gloom,
  I passed to bright, unclouded day.

A little and a lone green lane
  That opened on a common wide;
A distant, dreamy, dim blue chain
  Of mountains circling every side.

A heaven so clear, an earth so calm,
  So sweet, so soft, so hushed an air;
And, deepening still the dream-like charm,
  Wild moor-sheep feeding everywhere.

That was the scene, I knew it well;
  I knew the turfy pathway's sweep,
That, winding o'er each billowy swell,
  Marked out the tracks of wandering sheep.

Could I have lingered but an hour,
  It well had paid a week of toil;
But Truth has banished Fancy's power;
  Restraint and heavy task recoil.

Even as I stood with raptured eye,
  Absorbed in bliss so deep and dear,
My hour of rest had fleeted by,
  And back came labour, bondage, care.

II

THE BLUEBELL

The Bluebell is the sweetest flower
That waves in summer air:
Its blossoms have the mightiest power
To soothe my spirit's care.

There is a spell in purple heath
Too wildly, sadly dear;
The violet has a fragrant breath,
But fragrance will not cheer.

The trees are bare, the sun is cold,
And seldom, seldom seen;
The heavens have lost their zone of gold,
And earth her robe of green.

And ice upon the glancing stream
Has cast its sombre shade;
And distant hills and valleys seem
In frozen mist arrayed.

The Bluebell cannot charm me now,
The heath has lost its bloom;
The violets in the glen below,
They yield no sweet perfume.

But, though I mourn the sweet Bluebell,
'Tis better far away ;
I know how fast my tears would swell
To see it smile to-day.

For, oh ! when chill the sunbeams fall
Adown that dreary sky,
And gild yon dank and darkened wall
With transient brilliancy,

How do I weep, how do I pine
For the time of flowers to come,
And turn me from that fading shine,
To mourn the fields of home !

III

Loud without the wind was roaring
Through th' autumnal sky ;
Drenching wet, the cold rain pouring,
Spoke of winter nigh.
All too like that dreary eve,
Did my exiled spirit grieve.

Grieved at first, but grieved not long,
Sweet—how softly sweet!—it came ;
Wild words of an ancient song,
Undefined, without a name.

'It was spring, and the skylark was singing' ;
Those words they awakened a spell ;
They unlocked a deep fountain, whose springing,
Nor absence, nor distance can quell.

In the gloom of a cloudy November
They uttered the music of May ;
They kindled the perishing ember
Into fervour that could not decay.

Awaken, o'er all my dear moorland,
West-wind, in thy glory and pride!
Oh! call me from valley and lowland,
To walk by the hill-torrent's side!

It is swelled with the first snowy weather ;
The rocks they are icy and hoar,
And sullenly waves the long heather,
And the fern leaves are sunny no more.

There are no yellow stars on the mountain ;
The bluebells have long died away
From the brink of the moss-bedded fountain—
From the side of the wintry brae.

But lovelier than corn-fields all waving
In emerald, and vermeil, and gold,
Are the heights where the north-wind is raving,
And the crags where I wandered of old.

It was morning : the bright sun was beaming ;
How sweetly it brought back to me
The time when nor labour nor dreaming
Broke the sleep of the happy and free !

But blithely we rose as the dawn-heaven
Was melting to amber and blue,
And swift were the wings to our feet given,
As we traversed the meadows of dew.

For the moors ! For the moors, where the short grass
Like velvet beneath us should lie !
For the moors ! For the moors, where each high pass
Rose sunny against the clear sky !

For the moors, where the linnet was trilling
Its song on the old granite stone ;
Where the lark, the wild skylark, was filling
Every breast with delight like its own !

What language can utter the feeling
Which rose, when in exile afar,
On the brow of a lonely hill kneeling,
I saw the brown heath growing there?

It was scattered and stunted, and told me
That soon even that would be gone :
It whispered, 'The grim walls enfold me,
I have bloomed in my last summer's sun.'

But not the loved music, whose waking
Makes the soul of the Swiss die away,
Has a spell more adored and heartbreaking
Than, for me, in that blighted heath lay.

The spirit which bent 'neath its power,
How it longed—how it burned to be free !
If I could have wept in that hour,
Those tears had been heaven to me.

Well—well ; the sad minutes are moving,
Though loaded with trouble and pain ;
And some time the loved and the loving
Shall meet on the mountains again !

THE following little piece has no title; but in it the genius of a solitary region seems to address his wandering and wayward votary, and to recall within his influence the proud mind which rebelled at times even against what it most loved

IV

SHALL earth no more inspire thee,
Thou lonely dreamer now?
Since passion may not fire thee,
Shall nature cease to bow?

Thy mind is ever moving,
In regions dark to thee;
Recall its useless roving,
Come back, and dwell with me.

I know my mountain breezes
Enchant and soothe thee still,
I know my sunshine pleases,
Despite thy wayward will.

When day with evening blending,
Sinks from the summer sky,
I 've seen thy spirit bending
In fond idolatry.

I've watched thee every hour;
I know my mighty sway:
I know my magic power
To drive thy griefs away.

Few hearts to mortals given,
On earth so wildly pine;
Yet few would ask a heaven
More like this earth than thine.

Then let my winds caress thee;
Thy comrade let me be:
Since nought beside can bless thee,
Return—and dwell with me.

HERE again is the same mind in converse with a like abstraction. 'The Night-Wind,' breathing through an open window, has visited an ear which discerned language in its whispers.

V

THE NIGHT-WIND

IN summer's mellow midnight,
A cloudless moon shone through
Our open parlour window,
And rose-trees wet with dew.

I sat in silent musing;
The soft wind waved my hair;
It told me heaven was glorious,
And sleeping earth was fair.

I needed not its breathing
To bring such thoughts to me;
But still it whispered lowly,
How dark the woods will be!

'The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myriad voices
Instinct with spirit seem.'

I said, 'Go, gentle singer,
Thy wooing voice is kind:
But do not think its music
Has power to reach my mind.

'Play with the scented flower,
The young tree's supple bough,
And leave my human feelings
In their own course to flow.'

The wanderer would not heed me;
Its kiss grew warmer still.
'O come!' it sighed so sweetly;
'I'll win thee 'gainst thy will.

'Were we not friends from childhood?
Have I not loved thee long?
As long as thou, the solemn night,
Whose silence wakes my song.

'And when thy heart is resting
Beneath the church-aisle stone,
I shall have time for mourning,
And *thou* for being alone.'

IN these stanzas a louder gale has roused the sleeper on her pillow: the wakened soul struggles to blend with the storm by which it is stayed.

VI

'AYE—there it is! it wakes to-night
Deep feelings I thought dead;
Strong in the blast—quick gathering light—
The heart's flame kindles red.

'Now I can tell by thine altered cheek,
And by thine eyes' full gaze,
And by the words thou scarce dost speak,
How wildly fancy plays.

'Yes—I could swear that glorious wind
Has swept the world aside,
Has dashed its memory from thy mind
Like foam-bells from the tide:

'And thou art now a spirit pouring
Thy presence into all:
The thunder of the tempest's roaring,
The whisper of its fall:

'An universal influence,
From thine own influence free;
A principle of life—intense—
Lost to mortality.

'Thus truly, when that breast is cold,
Thy prisoned soul shall rise;
The dungeon mingle with the mould—
The captive with the skies.
Nature's deep being, thine shall hold,
Her spirit all thy spirit fold,
Her breath absorb thy sighs.
Mortal! though soon life's tale is told;
Who once lives, never dies!'

VII

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Love is like the wild rose-brier;
Friendship like the holly-tree.
The holly is dark when the rose-brier blooms,
But which will bloom most constantly?

The wild rose-brier is sweet in spring,
Its summer blossoms scent the air;
Yet wait till winter comes again,
And who will call the wild-brier fair!

Then, scorn the silly rose-wreath now,
And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That, when December blights thy brow,
He still may leave thy garland green.

VIII

THE ELDER'S REBUKE

'LISTEN! When your hair, like mine,
Takes a tint of silver grey;
When your eyes, with dimmer shine,
Watch life's bubbles float away:

When you, young man, have borne like me
The weary weight of sixty-three,
Then shall penance sore be paid
For those hours so wildly squandered;
And the words that now fall dead
On your ear, be deeply pondered—
Pondered and approved at last:
But their virtue will be past!

'Glorious is the prize of Duty,
Though she be "a serious power";
Treacherous all the lures of Beauty,
Thorny bud and poisonous flower!

'Mirth is but a mad beguiling
Of the golden-gifted time;
Love—a demon-meteor, wiling
Heedless feet to gulfs of crime.

'Those who follow earthly pleasure,
Heavenly knowledge will not lead;
Wisdom hides from them her treasure,
Virtue bids them evil-speed!

'Vainly may their hearts repenting,
Seek for aid in future years;
Wisdom, scorned, knows no relenting;
Virtue is not won by fears.'

Thus spake the ice-blooded elder grey;
The young man scoffed as he turned away,
Turned to the call of a sweet lute's measure,
Walked by the lightsome touch of pleasure:
Had he ne'er met a gentler teacher,
Woe had been wrought by that pitiless preacher.

IX

THE WANDERER FROM THE FOLD

How few, of all the hearts that loved,
  Are grieving for thee now;
And why should mine to-night be moved
  With such a sense of woe?

Too often thus, when left alone,
  Where none my thoughts can see,
Comes back a word, a passing tone
  From thy strange history.

Sometimes I seem to see thee rise,
  A glorious child again;
All virtues beaming from thine eyes
  That ever honoured men:

Courage and truth, a generous breast
  Where sinless sunshine lay:
A being whose very presence blest
  Like gladsome summer-day.

O, fairly spread thy early sail,
  And fresh, and pure, and free,
Was the first impulse of the gale
  Which urged life's wave for thee!

Why did the pilot, too confiding,
Dream o'er that ocean's foam,
And trust in Pleasure's careless guiding
To bring his vessel home?

For well he knew what dangers frowned,
What mists would gather, dim;
What rocks and shelves, and sands lay round
Between his port and him.

The very brightness of the sun,
The splendour of the main,
The wind which bore him wildly on
Should not have warned in vain.

An anxious gazer from the shore—
I marked the whitening wave,
And wept above thy fate the more
Because—I could not save.

It recks not now, when all is over:
But yet my heart will be
A mourner still, though friend and lover
Have both forgotten thee!

X

WARNING AND REPLY

In the earth—the earth—thou shalt be laid,
A grey stone standing over thee ;
Black mould beneath thee spread,
And black mould to cover thee.

'Well—there is rest there,
So fast come thy prophecy ;
The time when my sunny hair
Shall with grass roots entwined be.'

But cold—cold is that resting-place,
Shut out from joy and liberty,
And all who loved thy living face
Will shrink from it shudderingly.

'Not so. *Here* the world is chill,
And sworn friends fall from me :
But *there*—they will own me still,
And prize my memory.'

Farewell, then, all that love,
All that deep sympathy :
Sleep on ; Heaven laughs above,
Earth never misses thee.

Turf-sod and tombstone drear
Part human company ;
One heart breaks only—here,
But that heart was worthy thee !

XI

LAST WORDS

I KNEW not 'twas so dire a crime
To say the word, 'Adieu';
But this shall be the only time
My lips or heart shall sue.

The wild hillside, the winter morn,
The gnarled and ancient tree,
If in your breast they waken scorn,
Shall wake the same in me.

I can forget black eyes and brows,
And lips of falsest charm,
If you forget the sacred vows
Those faithless lips could form.

If hard commands can tame your love,
Or strongest walls can hold,
I would not wish to grieve above
A thing so false and cold.

And there are bosoms bound to mine
With links both tried and strong;
And there are eyes whose lightning shine
Has warmed and blest me long:

Those eyes shall make my only day,
Shall set my spirit free,
And chase the foolish thoughts away
That mourn your memory.

XII

THE LADY TO HER GUITAR

For him who struck thy foreign string,
I ween this heart has ceased to care ;
Then why dost thou such feelings bring
To my sad spirit—old Guitar ?

It is as if the warm sunlight
In some deep glen should lingering stay,
When clouds of storm, or shades of night,
Have wrapt the parent orb away.

It is as if the glassy brook
Should image still its willows fair,
Though years ago the woodman's stroke
Laid low in dust their Dryad-hair.

Even so, Guitar, thy magic tone
Hath moved the tear and waked the sigh ;
Hath bid the ancient torrent moan
Although its very source is dry.

XIII

THE TWO CHILDREN

Heavy hangs the rain-drop
From the burdened spray ;
Heavy broods the damp mist
On uplands far way.

Heavy looms the dull sky,
Heavy rolls the sea ;
And heavy throbs the young heart
Beneath that lonely tree.

Never has a blue streak
Cleft the clouds since morn ;
Never has his grim fate
Smiled since he was born.

Frowning on the infant,
Shadowing childhood's joy,
Guardian-angel knows not
That melancholy boy.

Day is passing swiftly
Its sad and sombre prime ;
Boyhood sad is merging
In sadder manhood's time :

All the flowers are praying
  For sun, before they close,
And he prays too—unconscious—
  That sunless human rose.

Blossom—that the west-wind
  Has never wooed to blow,
Scentless are thy petals,
  Thy dew is cold as snow!

Soul—where kindred kindness,
  No early promise woke,
Barren is thy beauty,
  As weed upon a rock.

Wither—soul and blossom!
  You both were vainly given:
Earth reserves no blessing
  For the unblest of heaven!

XIV

CHILD of delight, with sun-bright hair,
And sea-blue, sea-deep eyes!
Spirit of bliss! what brings thee here,
Beneath these sullen skies?

Thou shouldst live in eternal spring,
Where endless day is never dim;
Why, Seraph, has thine erring wing
Wafted thee down to weep with him?

'Ah! not from heaven am I descended,
Nor do I come to mingle tears;
But sweet is day, though with shadows blended;
And, though clouded, sweet are youthful years.

'I—the image of light and gladness—
Saw and pitied that mournful boy,
And I vowed — if need were — to share his sadness,
And give to him my sunny joy.

'Heavy and dark the night is closing;
Heavy and dark may its bidding be:
Better for all from grief reposing,
And better for all who watch like me—

'Watch in love by a fevered pillow,
Cooling the fever with pity's balm;
Safe as the petrel on tossing billow,
Safe in mine own soul's golden calm!

'Guardian-angel he lacks no longer;
Evil fortune he need not fear:
Fate is strong, but love is stronger;
And *my* love is truer than angel-care.'

XV

THE VISIONARY

Silent is the house : all are laid asleep :
One alone looks out o'er the snow-wreaths deep,
Watching every cloud, dreading every breeze
That whirls the wildering drift, and bends the groaning trees.

Cheerful is the hearth, soft the matted floor ;
Not one shivering gust creeps through pane or door ;
The little lamp burns straight, its rays shoot strong and far :
I trim it well, to be the wanderer's guiding-star.

Frown, my haughty sire ! chide, my angry dame ;
Set your slaves to spy ; threaten me with shame :
But neither sire nor dame, nor prying serf shall know,
What angel nightly tracks that waste of frozen snow.

What I love shall come like visitant of air,
Safe in secret power from lurking human snare ;
What loves me, no word of mine shall e'er betray,
Though for faith unstained my life must forfeit pay.

Burn, then, little lamp; glimmer straight and clear—
Hush! a rustling wing stirs, methinks, the air:
He for whom I wait, thus ever comes to me;
Strange Power! I trust thy might; trust thou my constancy.

XVI

ENCOURAGEMENT

I DO not weep; I would not weep;
Our mother needs no tears:
Dry thine eyes, too; 'tis vain to keep
This causeless grief for years.

What though her brow be changed and cold,
Her sweet eyes closed for ever?
What though the stone—the darksome mould
Our mortal bodies sever?

What though her hand smooth ne'er again
Those silken locks of thine?
Nor, through long hours of future pain,
Her kind face o'er thee shine?

Remember still, she is not dead;
She sees us, sister, now;
Laid, where her angel spirit fled,
'Mid heath and frozen snow.

And from that world of heavenly light
Will she not always bend
To guide us in our lifetime's night,
And guard us to the end?

Thou know'st she will; and thou mayst mourn
That *we* are left below:
But not that she can ne'er return
To share our earthly woe.

XVII

STANZAS

Often rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

To-day, I will seek not the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I 'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

I 'll walk where my own nature would be leading:
It vexes me to choose another guide:
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain-side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
More glory and more grief than I can tell:
The earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling
Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

THE following are the last lines my sister Emily ever wrote.

XVIII

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere :
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity !
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee !

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts : unutterably vain ;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idle froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity ;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

PRIVATELY PRINTED POEMS

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PRIVATELY PRINTED POEMS

I

O God of heaven! The dream of horror,
The frightful dream is over now;
The sickened heart, the blasting sorrow,
The ghastly night, the ghastlier morrow,
The aching sense of utter woe.

The burning tears that would keep welling,
The groan that mocked at every tear,
That burst from out their dreary dwelling,
As if each gasp were life expelling,
But life was nourished by despair.

The tossing and the anguished pining,
The grinding teeth and starting eye;
The agony of still repining,
When not a spark of hope was shining
From gloomy fate's relentless sky.

The impatient rage, the useless shrinking
From thoughts that yet could not be borne;
The soul that was for ever thinking,
Till nature maddened, tortured, sinking,
At last refused to mourn.

It 's over now—and I am free,
And the ocean wind is caressing me,
The wild wind from that wavy main
I never thought to see again.

Bless thee, bright Sea, and glorious dome,
And my own world, my spirit's home ;
Bless thee, bless all—I cannot speak ;
My voice is choked, but not with grief,
And salt drops from my haggard cheek
Descend like rain upon the heath.

How long they 've wet a dungeon floor,
Falling on flagstones damp and grey :
I used to weep even in my sleep ;
The night was dreadful like the day.

I used to weep when winter's snow
Whirled through the grating stormily ;
But then it was a calmer woe,
For everything was drear to me.

The bitterest time, the worst of all,
Was that in which the summer sheen
Cast a green lustre on the wall
That told of fields of lovelier green.

Often I 've sat down on the ground,
Gazing up to the flush scarce seen,
Till, heedless of the darkness round,
My soul has sought a land serene.

It sought the arch of heaven divine,
The pure blue heaven with clouds of gold ;
It sought thy father's home and mine
As I remembered it of old.

Oh, even now too horribly
Come back the feelings that would swell,
When with my face hid on my knee,
I strove the bursting groans to quell.

I flung myself upon the stone ;
I howled, and tore my tangled hair ;
And then, when the first gust had flown,
Lay in unspeakable despair.

Sometimes a curse, sometimes a prayer,
Would quiver on my parchèd tongue ;
But both without a murmur there
Died in the breast from whence they sprung.

And so the day would fade on high,
And darkness quench that lonely beam,
And slumber mould my misery
Into some strange and spectral dream,
Whose phantom horrors made me know
The worst extent of human woe.

But this is past, and why return
O'er such a path to brood and mourn?
Shake off the fetters, break the chain,
And live and love and smile again.

The waste of youth, the waste of years,
Departed in that dungeon thrall ;
The gnawing grief, the hopeless tears,
Forget them—oh, forget them all !

August 7, 1834, *E. J. B.*

II

SONG

Lord of Elbe, on Elbe hill
The mist is thick and the wind is chill;
And the heart of thy friend from the dawning of
day
Has sighed for sorrow that thou wert away.

Lord of Elbe, how pleasant to me
The sound of thy blithesome step would be,
Rustling the heath that only now
Moans as the night gusts over it blow.

Bright are the fires in thy noble home;
I see them far off, and it deepens the gloom;
Shining like stars through the high forest boughs,
Gladder they glow in the park's repose.

O Alexander! when I return,
Warm as those hearths thy heart would burn;
Light as thine own my step would fall,
If I might hear thy voice in the hall.

But thou art now on the desolate sea,
Thinking of Gondal and grieving for me;
Longing to be in sweet Elbe again,
Thinking and grieving and longing in vain.

August 19, 1834.

III

Cold, clear, and blue the morning heaven
Expands its arch on high ;
Cold, clear, and blue Lake Werna's water
Reflects that winter sky :
The moon has set, but Venus shines,
A silent, silvery star.

Will the day be bright or cloudy?
Sweetly has its dawn begun ;
But the heaven may shake with thunder
Ere the setting of the sun.

Lady, watch Apollo's journey ;
Thus thy first hour's course shall be :
If his beams through summer vapours
Warm the earth all placidly,
Her days shall pass like a pleasant dream in sweet tranquillity.

If it darken, if a shadow
Quench his rays and summon rain,
Flowers may open, buds may blossom,
Bud and flower alike are vain ;
Her days shall pass like a mournful story in care and tears and pain.

If the wind be fresh and free,
The wide skies clear and cloudless blue,
The woods and fields and golden flowers
Sparkling in sunshine and in dew,
Her days shall pass in Glory's light the world's
drear desert through.

July 12, 1836.

IV

Tell me, tell me, smiling child,
What the past is like to thee?
An Autumn evening, soft and mild,
With a wind that sighs mournfully.

Tell me what is the present hour?
A green and flowery spray,
Where a young bird sits gathering its power
To mount and fly away.

And what is the future, happy one?
A sea beneath a cloudless sun;
A mighty, glorious, dazzling sea,
Stretching into infinity.

The inspiring music's thrilling sound,
The glory of the festal day,
The glittering splendour rising round,
Have passed like all earth's joys away.

Forsaken by that lady fair,
She glides unheeding through them all;
Covering her brow to hide the tear
That still, though checked, trembles to fall.

She hurries through the outer hall,
And up the stairs through galleries dim,
That murmur to the breezes' call
The night-wind's lonely vesper hymn.

V

HIGH waving heather 'neath stormy blasts bending,
Midnight and moonlight and bright shining stars;
Darkness and glory rejoicingly blending,
Earth rising to heaven and heaven descending;
Man's spirit away from the drear dungeon sending,
Bursting the fetters and breaking the bars.

All down the mountain-sides wild forests lending
The mighty voice to the life-giving wind;
Rivers their banks in the jubilee bending,
Fast through the valleys a reckless course wending,
Wilder and deeper their waters extending,
Leaving a desolate desert behind.

Shining and lowering, and swelling and dying,
Changing for ever from midnight to noon;
Roaring like thunder, like soft music sighing,
Shadows on shadows advancing and flying;
Lightning-bright flashes the deep gloom defying,
Coming as swiftly and fading as soon.

Woods, you need not frown on me;
Spectral trees, that so dolefully
Shake your heads in the dreary sky,
You need not mock so bitterly.

December 13, 1836.

VI

THE night of storms has past ;
The sunshine bright and clear
Gives glory to the verdant waste,
And warms the breezy air.

And I would leave my bed,
Its cheering smile to see,
To chase the visions from my head,
Whose forms have troubled me.

In all the hours of gloom
My soul was rapt away ;
I stood by a marble tomb
Where royal corpses lay.

It was just the time of eve,
When parted ghosts might come,
Above their prisoned dust to grieve
And wail their woeful doom.

And truly at my side
I saw a shadowy thing,
Most dim, and yet its presence there
Curdled my blood with ghastly fear
And ghastlier wondering.

My breath I could not draw,
The air seemed uncanny ;
But still my eyes with maddening gaze
Were fixed upon its fearful face,
And its were fixed on me.

I fell down on the stone,
But could [not] turn away ;
My words died in a voiceless moan
When I began to pray.

And still it bent above,
Its features full in view ;
It seemed close by and yet more far
Than this world from the farthest star
That tracks the boundless blue.

Indeed 'twas not the space
Of earth or time between,
But the sea of deep eternity,
The gulf o'er which mortality
Has never, never been.

Oh, bring not back again
The horror of that hour !
When its lips opened and a sound
Awoke the stillness reigning round,
Faint as a dream, but the earth shrank,
And heaven's lights shivered 'neath its power.

Woe for the day! Regina's pride,
Regina's hope is in the grave;
And who shall rule my land beside,
And who shall save?

Woe for the day! with gory tears
My countless sons this day shall rue;
Woe for the day! a thousand years
Cannot repair what one shall do.

Woe for the day! 'twixt rain and wind
That sad lament was ringing;
It almost broke my heart to hear
Such dreamy, dreary singing.

June 10, 1837, *E. J. Brontë.*

VII

I saw thee, child, one summer day
Suddenly leave thy cheerful play,
And in the green grass lowly lying
I listened to thy mournful sighing.

I knew the wish that waked that wail,
I knew the source whence sprung those tears;
You longed for fate to raise the veil
That darkened over coming years.

The anxious prayer was heard, and power
Was given me in that silent hour
To open to an infant's eye
The portals of futurity.

But, child of dust, the fragrant flowers,
The bright blue flowers and velvet sod,
Were strange conductors to the bowers
Thy daring footsteps must have trod.

I watched my time, and summer passed,
And autumn waning fleeted by,
And doleful winter nights at last
In cloudy morning clothed the sky.

And now it 's come. This evening fell
Not stormily, but stilly drear ;
A sound sweeps o'er thee like a knell
To banish joy and welcome care.

A fluttering blast that shakes the leaves
And whistles round the gloomy wall,
And lingering long, and thinking grieves,
For 'tis the spectre's call.

He hears me : what a sudden start
Sent the blood icy to the heart ;
He wakens, and how ghastly white
That face looks in the dim lamp-light.

Those tiny hands in vain essay
To brush the shadowy fiend away ;
There is a horror on his brow,
An anguish in his bosom now ;

A fearful anguish in his eyes,
Fixed strainedly on the vacant air ;
Hoarsely bursts in long-drawn sighs,
His panting breath enchained by fear.

Poor child ! if spirits such as I
Could weep o'er human misery,
A tear might flow, ay, many a tear,
To see the head that lies before,
To see the sunshine disappear ;

And hear the stormy waters roar,
Breaking upon a desolate shore,
Cut off from hope in early day,
From earth and glory cut away.
But it is doomed, and Morning's light
Must image forth the scowl of night,
And childhood's flower must waste its bloom
Beneath the shadow of the tomb.

July 1837.

VIII

THE battle had passed from the height,
And still did evening fall;
While heaven with its restful night
Gloriously canopied all.

The dead around were sleeping
On heath and granite grey,
And the dying their last watch were keeping
In the closing of the day.

. . . . .

How golden bright from earth and heaven
The summer day declines!
How gloriously o'er land and sea
The parting sunbeam shines!
There is a voice in the wind that waves
Those bright rejoicing trees.

. . . . .

Not a vapour had stained the breezeless blue,
Not a cloud had dimmed the sun,
From the time of morning's earliest dew
Till the summer day was done.

And all as pure and all as bright
The sun of evening died,
And purer still its parting light
Shone on Lake Elnor's tide.

Waveless and calm lies that silent deep
In its wilderness of moors,
Solemn and soft the moonbeams sleep
Upon its heathy shores.

The deer are gathered to their rest,
The wild sheep seek the fold.
. . . . .
Only some spires of bright green grass
Transparently in sunshine quivering.

The sun has set, and the long grass now
Waves dreamily in the evening wind ;
And the wild bird has flown from that old
grey stone,
In some warm nook a couch to find.

In all the lonely landscape round
I see no light and hear no sound,
Except the wind that far away
Comes sighing o'er the heathy sea.

Lady, in thy palace hall,
Once perchance thy face was seen ;
Can no memory now recall
Thought again to what has been?

August 1837.

IX

Alone I sat; the summer day
Had died in smiling light away;
I saw it die, I watched it fade
From the misty hill and breezeless glade.

And thoughts in my soul were rushing,
And my heart bowed beneath their power;
And tears within my eyes were gushing
Because I could not speak the feeling,
The solemn joy around me stealing,
In that divine, untroubled hour.

I asked myself, O why has Heaven
Denied the precious gift to me,
The glorious gift to many given,
To speak their thoughts in poetry?

Dreams have encircled me, I said,
From careless childhood's sunny time;
Visions by ardent fancy fed
Since life was in its morning prime.

But now, when I had hoped to sing,
My fingers strike a tuneless string;
And still the burden of the strain—
I strive no more, 'tis all in vain.

. . . . . .

August 1837.

X

THE night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow ;
But a tyrant spell has bound me,
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow,
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below ;
But nothing dread can move me—
I will not, cannot go.

November 1837.

XI

I'LL come when thou art saddest,
Bring light to the darkened room,
When the rude day's mirth has vanished,
And the smile of joy is banished
From evening's chilly gloom.

I'll come when the heart's worst feeling
Has entire, unbiassed sway,
And my influence o'er thee stealing,
Grief deepening, joy congealing,
Shall bear thy soul away.

Listen! 'tis just the hour,
The awful time for thee.
Dost thou not feel upon thy soul
A flood of strange sensations roll,
Forerunners of a sterner power,
Heralds of me?

November 1837.

XII

I WOULD have touched the heavenly key
That spoke alike of bliss and thee ;
I would have woke the evening song,
But its words died upon my tongue.
But then I knew that he stood free,
Would never speak of joy again,
And then I felt . . . [*unfinished*].

November 1837.

XIII

Now trust a heart that trusts in you,
And firmly say the word adieu ;
Be sure, wherever I may roam,
My heart is with your heart at home ;

Unless there be no truth on earth,
And vows most true are nothing worth,
And mortal man have no control
Over his own unhappy soul ;

Unless I change in every thought,
And memory will restore me nought,
And all I have of virtue die
Beneath far Gondal's foreign sky.

The mountain peasant loves the heath
Better than richest plains beneath ;
He would not give one moorland wild
For all the fields that ever smiled.

And whiter brows than yours may be,
And rosier cheeks my eyes may see,
And lightning looks from orbs divine
About my pathway burn and shine.

But that pure light, changeless and strong,
Cherished and watched and nursed so long ;
That love that first its glory gave,
Shall be my pole-star to the grave.

November 1837.

XIV

Sleep brings no joy to me,
Remembrance never dies,
My soul is given to mystery,
And lives in sighs.

Sleep brings no rest to me;
The shadows of the dead,
My wakening eyes may never see,
Surround my bed.

Sleep brings no hope to me,
In soundest sleep they come,
And with their doleful imag'ry
Deepen the gloom.

Sleep brings no strength to me,
No power renewed to brave;
I only sail a wilder sea,
A darker wave.

Sleep brings no friend to me
To soothe and aid to bear;
They all gaze on how scornfully,
And I despair.

Sleep brings no wish to fret
My harassed heart beneath;
My only wish is to forget
In endless sleep of death.

November 1837.

XV

Strong I stand, though I have borne
Anger, hate, and bitter scorn ;
Strong I stand, and laugh to see
How mankind have fought with me.

Shade of history, I condemn
All the puny ways of men ;
Free my heart, my spirit free,
Beckon, and I 'll follow thee.

False and foolish mortal know,
If you scorn the world's disdain,
Your mean soul is far below
Other worms, however vain.

Thing of Dust, with boundless pride,
Dare you ask me for a guide?
With the humble I will be ;
Haughty men are naught to me.

November 1837.

XVI

O MOTHER ! I am not regretting
To leave this wretched world below,
If there be nothing but forgetting
In that dark land to which I go.

Yet though 'tis wretched now to languish,
Deceived and tired and hopeless here,
No heart can quite repress the anguish
Of leaving things that once were dear.

Twice twelve short years and all is over,
And day and night to rise no more,
And never more to be a rover
Along the fields, the woods, the shore.

And never more at early dawning
To watch the stars of midnight wane,
To breathe the breath of summer morning,
And see its sunshine ne'er again.

I hear the abbey bells are ringing ;
Methinks their chime sounds faint and drear,
Or else the wind is adverse winging,
And wafts its music from my ear.

The wind the winter night is speaking
Of thoughts and things that should not stay :
Mother, come near, my heart is breaking ;
I cannot bear to go away.

And I must go whence no returning
To soothe your grief or calm your care ;
Nay, do not weep ; that bitter mourning
Tortures my soul with wild despair.

No ; tell me that when I am lying
In the old church beneath the stone,
You 'll dry your tears and check your sighing,
And soon forget the spirit gone.

You 've asked me long to tell what sorrow
Has blanched my cheek and quenched my eye ;
And we shall never cry to-morrow,
So I 'll confess before I die.

Ten years ago in last September
Fernando left his home and you,
And still I think you must remember
The anguish of that last adieu.

And well you know how wildly pining
I longed to see his face again,
Through all the Autumn drear deceiving
Its stormy nights and days of rain.

Down on the skirts of Areon's Forest
There lies a lone and lovely glade,
And there the hearts together nourished,
Their first, their fatal parting made.

The afternoon in softened glory
Bathed each green swell and waving tree,
And the broad park spread before me
Stretched towards the boundless sea.

And there I stood when he had left me,
With ashy cheek and tearless eye,
Watching the ship whose sail bereft me
Of life and hope, and love and joy.

It past: that night I sought a pillow
Of sleepless woe and grieving lone;
My soul still bounded o'er the billow,
And mourned a love for ever flown.

Yet smiling bright in recollection
One blissful hour returns to me;
The letter told of firm affection,
Of safe deliverance from the sea.

But not another; fearing, hoping,
Spring, winter, harvest glided o'er;
And time at length brought power for coping
With thoughts I could not once endure.

And I would seek in summer evening
The place that saw our last farewell,
And there a chain of visions weaving,
I'd linger till the curfew bell.

December 14, 1837.

XVII

AWAKE, awake! how loud the stormy morning
Calls up to life the nation's resting round;
Arise, arise! it is the voice of mourning
That breaks our slumber with so wild a sound.

The voice of mourning; listen to its pealing;
That shout of triumph drowns the sigh of woe;
Each tortured heart forgets its wonted feeling,
Each faded cheek resumes its long lost glow.

Our souls are full of gladness; God has given
Our arms to victory, our foes to death;
The crimson ensign waves its sheet in heaven,
The sea-green standard lies in dust beneath.

Patriots, the stain is on your country's glory;
Soldiers, preserve that glory bright and free;
Let Almedore in peace and battle gory
Be still another name for victory.

December 1837.

This poem in the original manuscript is entitled 'Song by Julius Angora.'

XVIII

O WANDER not so far away!
O love, forgive this selfish tear;
It may be sad for thee to stay,
But how can I live lonely here?

The still May morn is warm and bright,
Young flowers are fresh, and grass is green,
And in the haze of glorious light
Our long low hills are scarcely seen.

Our woods—e'en now their young leaves hide
Where blackbird and the throstle dwell;
And high in heaven so blue and wide
A thousand strains of Music swell.

He looks on all with eyes that speak
So deep, so drear a woe to me!
There is a faint red on his cheek
Unlike the bloom I like to see.

Call Death—yes Death he is mine own,
The grave must close those limbs around,
And hush, for ever hush the tone,
I loved above all earthly sound.

Well! pass away with the other flowers;
Too dark for them, too dark for thee
Are the hours to come, the joyless hours,
That time is treasuring up for me.

If thou hast sinned in this world of woe,
'Twas but the dust of thy drear abode ;
Thy soul was pure when it entered here
And pure it will go again to God.

February 20, 1838.

XIX

Why do I hate that lone green dell?
Buried in moors and mountains wild,
That is a spot I had loved too well,
Had I but seen it when a child.

There are bones whitening there in the summer heat;
But it is not for that, and none can tell,
None but one can the secret repeat,
Why I hate that lone green dell.

Noble foe, I pardon thee
All thy cold and scornful pride,
For thou wast a priceless friend to me
When my sad heart had none beside.

And leaning on thy generous arm,
A breath of old times over me came;
The earth shone round with a long-lost charm:
Alas! I forgot I was not the same.

Before a day, an hour, passed by,
My spirit knew itself once more;
I saw the gilded visions fly
And leave me as I was before.

May 9, 1838.

XX

GLENEDEN'S DREAM

TELL me, whether is it winter?
Say how long my sleep has been?
Have the woods, I left so lovely,
Lost their robes of tender green?

Is the morning slow in coming?
Is the night-time loth to go?
Tell me, are the dreary mountains
Drearier still with drifted snow?

'Captive, since thou sawest the frost,
All its leaves have died away;
And another March has woven
Garlands for another May.

'Ice has barred the Arctic waters,
Soft southern winds have set it free;
And once more to deep green valley
Golden flowers might welcome thee.'

Watching in this lonely prison,
Shut from joy and kindly air,
Heaven, descending in a vision,
Taught my soul to do and bear.

It was night, a night of winter;
I lay on the dungeon floor,
And all other sounds were silent,
All, except the river's roar.

Over Death, and Desolation,
Fireless hearths, and lifeless homes ;
Over orphans' heartsick sorrows,
Patriot fathers' bloody tombs ;

Over friends, that my arms never
Might embrace in love again ;
Memory pondered until madness
Struck its poniard in my brain.

Deepest slumbers followed raving,
Yet, methought, I brooded still ;
Still I saw my country bleeding,
Dying for a tyrant's will.

Not because *my* bliss was blasted,
Burned within the avenging flame :
Not because my scattered kindred
Died in woe, or lived in shame.

God doth know I would have given
Every bosom dear to me,
Could that sacrifice have purchased
Tortured Gondal's liberty !

But that at Ambition's bidding,
All her cherished hopes should wane,
That her noblest sons should muster,
Strive and fight and fall in vain ;

Hut and castle, hall and cottage,
Roofless, crumbling to the ground ;
Mighty heaven, a glad avenger
Thy eternal Justice found !

Yes, the arm that once would shudder,
Even to grieve a wounded deer,
I beheld it, unrelenting,
Clothe in blood its sovereign's prayer.

Glorious Dream! I saw the city,
Blazing in imperial shine;
And among adoring thousands
Stood a man of form divine.

None need point the princely victim,
Now he smiles with royal pride!
Now his glance is bright as lightning,
Now the knife is in his side!

Ha! I saw how death could darken,
Darken that triumphant eye!
His red heart's blood drenched my dagger;
My ear drank his dying sigh.

Shadows came! what means this midnight?
O my God, I know it all!
Know the fever-dream is over,
Unavenged, the Avenger's fall!

May 21, 1838.

XXI

It 's over now ; I 've known it all ;
I 'll hide it in my heart no more,
But back again that night recall,
And think the fearful vision o'er.

The evening sun in cloudless shine
Has passed from summer's heaven divine,
And dark the shades of twilight grew,
And stars were in the depth of blue,
And in the heath or mountain far
From human eye and human care,
With thoughtful thought and tearful eye,
I sadly watched that solemn sky.

. . . . .

The wide cathedral Isles are lone,
The vast crowds vanished every one ;
There can be naught beneath that dome
But the cold tenants of the tomb.

O look again, for still on high
The lamps are burning gloriously ;
And look again, for still beneath
A thousand thousand live and breathe.

All mute as death beyond the shrine
That gleams in lustre so divine

Were Gondal's monarchs bending low,
After the hour of silent prayer,
Take in heaven's sight their awful vow,
And never-dying union swear.

King Julius lifts his impious eye
From the dark marble to the sky,
Blasts with that oath his perjured soul,
And changeless is his cheek the while,
Though burning thoughts that spurn control,
Kindle a short and bitter smile,
As face to face the King's men stand,
His false hand clasped in Gerald's hand.

May 22, 1838.

XXII

SONG

THIS shall be thy lullaby,
Rocking on the stormy sea ;
Though it roar in thunder wild,
Sleep, stilly sleep, thou bright-haired child.

When our shuddering boat was crossing
Eldern's lake so rudely tossing,
Then 'twas first my nursling smiled ;
Sleep, softly sleep, my fair-browed child.

Waves above thy cradle break,
Foamy tears are on thy cheek,
Yet the ocean's self grows mild
When it bears my slumbering child.

May 1838.

XXIII

'Twas one of those dark, cloudy days
That sometimes come in summer blaze,
When heaven drops not, when earth is still,
And deeper green is on the hill.

Lonely at her window sitting
While the evening steals away,
Fitful winds foreboding, flitting
Through a sky of cloudy grey.

There are two trees in a lonely field,
They breathe a spell to me;
A dreary thought their dark boughs yield,
All waving solemnly.

. . . . .

What is that smoke that ever still
Comes rolling down the dark brown hill?

Still as she spoke the ebon clouds
Would part and sunlight shone between,
But dreary, strange, and pale and cold.

. . . . .

Away, away, resign thee now
To scenes of gloom and thoughts of fear;
I trace the figure on thy brow,
Welcome at last, though once so drear.

It will not shine again,
Its sad course is done ;
I have seen the last ray wane
Of the cold, bright sun.

None but me beheld him dying,
Parting with the parting day ;
Wind of evening, sadly sighing,
Bore his soul from earth away.

Coldly, bleakly, dreamily
Evening died on Elbe's shore ;
Winds were in the cloudy sky,
Sighing, mourning ever more.

Old hall of Elbe, ruined, lonely now,
Home to which the voice of life shall never more return ;
Chambers roofless, desolate, where weeds and ivy grow ;
Windows through whose broken panes the night-winds coldly mourn—
Home of the departed, the long-departed dead.

June 1838.

XXIV

DOUGLAS RIDE

WELL narrower draw the circle round,
And hush that music's solemn sound,
And quench the lamp and stir the fire,
To rouse its flickering radiance higher;
Toss up the window's velvet veil,
That we may hear the night-wind wail,
For wild those gusts, and well their chimes
Blend with a song of troubled times.

July 11, 1838.

XXV

SONG

WHAT rider up Gobeloin's glen
Has spurred his straining steed,
And fast and far from living men
Has passed with maddening speed?

I saw his hoof-prints mark the rock,
When swift he left the plain;
I heard deep down the echoing shock
Re-echo back again.

From cliff to cliff, thro' rock and heath,
That coal-black courser bounds;
Nor heeds the river pent beneath,
Nor marks how fierce it sounds.

With streaming hair, and forehead bare
And mantle waving wide
His master rides; the eagle there
Soars up on every side;

The goats fly by with timid cry,
Their realm rashly won;
They pause—he still ascends on high—
They gaze, but he is gone.

O gallant horse, hold on thy course;
The road is tracked behind.
Spur, rider, spur or vain thy force—
Death comes on every wind.

Roared thunder loud from that pitchy cloud?
From it the torrents flow?
Or wakes the breeze in the swaying trees
That frown so dark below?

He breathes at last, when the valley is past,
He rests on the grey rock's brow;
What ails thee, steed? At thy master's need,
Wilt thou prove faithless now?

No; hardly checked, with ears erect,
The charger champed his rein;
Ere his quivering limbs, all foam-flecked,
Were off like light again.

Hark! through the pass with threatening crash
Comes on the increasing roar!
But what shall brave the deep, deep waves
The deadly pass before?

Their feet are dyed in a darker tide,
Who dare those dangers drear.
Their breasts have burst through the battle's worst,
And why should they tremble here?

Strong hearts they bear and arms as good,
To conquer or to fall;
They dash into the boiling flood,
They gain the rock's steep wall.

'Now, my brave men, this one pass more,
This narrow chasm of stone,
And Douglas for our sovereign's gore
Shall yield us back his own.'

I hear their ever-rising tread
Sound through the granite glen;
There is a tall pine overhead
Held by the mountain men.

That dizzy bridge which no horse could track
Has checked the outlaw's way;
There like a wild beast turns he back,
And grimly stands at bay.

Why smiles he so, when far below
He spies the toiling chase?
The pond'rous tree sways heavily,
And totters from its place.

They raise their eyes, for the sunny skies
Are lost in sudden shade;
But Douglas neither shrinks nor flies,
He need not fear the dead.

XXVI

SONG

GERALDINE, the moon is shining
With so soft, so bright a ray;
Seems it not that eve's declining
Ushered in a fairer day?

While the wind is whispering only,
Fair across the water borne;
Let us in this silence lonely
Sit beneath the ancient thorn.

Wild the road, and rough and dreary;
Barren all the moorland round;
Rude the couch that rests us weary;
Mossy stone and heathy ground.

But when winter storms were meeting
In the moonless midnight dome,
Did we heed the tempests beating,
Howling round our spirits' home?

No; that tree with branches riven
Whitening in the whirl of snow,
As it tossed against the heaven,
Sheltered happy hearts below.

And at Autumn's mild returning
Shall our feet forget the way?
And in Cynthia's silvan morning,
Geraldine, wilt thou delay?

October 17, 1838.

XXVII

WHERE were ye all? and where wert thou?
I saw an eye that shone like thine,
But dark curls waved around his brow,
And his star-glance was strange to mine.

And yet a dreamlike comfort came
Into my heart and anxious eye,
And trembling yet to hear his name,
I bent to listen watchfully.

This voice, though never heard before,
Still spoke to me of years gone by;
It seemed a vision to restore,
That brought the hot tears to my eye.

. . . . . .

I paused on the threshold, I turned to the sky;
I looked to the heaven and the dark mountains round;
The full moon sailed bright through that ocean on high,
And the wind murmured past with a wild eerie sound.

And I entered the walls of my dark prison-house;
Mysterious it rose from the billowy moor.

. . . . .

O come with me, thus ran the song,
The moon is bright in Autumn's sky,
And thou hast toiled and laboured long,
With aching head and weary eye.

October 1838.

XXVIII

Light up thy halls! 'Tis closing day;
I'm drear and lone and far away.
Cold blows on my breast the Northwind's bitter sigh,
And, oh! my couch is bleak, beneath the rainy sky!

Light up thy halls! think not of me;
Absent is that face which thou hast hated so to see;
Bright be thine eyes, undimmed their dazzling shine,
For never, never more shall they encounter mine!

The desert moor is dark, there is tempest in the air;
I have breathed my only wish in one last, one burning prayer;
A prayer that would come forth altho' it lingered long;
That set on fire my heart, but froze upon my tongue.

And now, it shall be done before the morning rise;
I will not watch the sun arise in yonder skies.
One task alone remains—thy pictured face to view,
And then I go to prove if God, at least, be true!

Do I not see thee now? Thy black resplendent
hair;
The glory-beaming brow; and smile how heavenly
fair!
Thine eyes are turned away—those eyes I would
not see;
Their dark, their deadly ray would more than
madden me.

Then, go, deceiver, go! My hair is streaming
wet;
My heart's blood flows to buy the blessing—to
forget!
Oh! could that heart give back—give back again
to thine,
One tenth part of the pain that clouds my dark
decline.

Oh! could I see thy lids weighed down in cheer-
less woe;
Too full to hide their tears, too stern to overflow;
Oh! could I know thy soul with equal grief was
torn,
This fate might be endured—this anguish might
be borne.

How gloomy grows the night! 'Tis Gondal's
wind that blows;
I shall not tread again the deep glens where it
rose.

I feel it on my face— Where, wild blast! dost thou roam?
What do we, wanderer! here, so far away from home?

I do not need thy breath to cool my death-cold brow;
But go to that far land, where she is shining now;
Tell her my latest wish, tell her my dreary doom;
Say that my pangs are past, but *hers* are yet to come.

Vain words, vain, frenzied thoughts! No ear can hear my call.
Lost in the desert air my frantic curses fall.
And could she see me now, perchance her lip would smile,
Would smile in careless pride and utter scorn the while!

But yet for all her hate, each parting glance would tell
A stronger passion breathed, burned in this last farewell—
Unconquered in my soul the Tyrant rules me still:
Life bows to my control, but *Love* I cannot kill!

November 1, 1838.

XXIX

O DREAM, where art thou now?
Long years have passed away
Since cast from off thine angel brow
I saw the light decay.

Alas! alas for me!
Thou wert so bright and fair,
I could not think thy memory
Would yield me nought but care!

The moonbeam and the storm,
The summer eve divine,
The silent night of solemn calm,
The full moon's cloudless shine,

Were once entwined with thee,
But now with weary pain.
Lost vision! 'tis enough for me
Thou canst not shine again.

November 3, 1838.

XXX

How still, how happy! These are words
That once would scarce agree together;
I loved the splashing of the surge,
The changing heaven, the breezy weather,

More than smooth seas and cloudless skies
And solemn, soothing, softened airs,
That in the forest woke no sighs
And from the green spray shook no tears.

How still, how happy! now I feel
Where silence dwells is sweeter far
Than laughing mirth with joyous swell,
However pure its raptures are.

Come, sit down on this sunny stone;
'Tis wintry light o'er flowless moors;
But sit, for we are all alone,
And clear expand heaven's breathless shores.

I could think in the withered grass
Spring's budding wreaths we might discern;
The violet's eye might shyly flash,
And young leaves shoot among the fern.

It is but thought—full many a night
The snow shall clothe these hills afar,
And storms shall add a drearier blight
And winds shall wage a wilder war,

Before the lark may herald in
  Fresh foliage twined with blossoms fair,
And summer days again begin
  Their glory-haloed crown to wear.

Yet my heart loves December's smile
  As much as July's golden *gleam*!
Then let me sit and watch the while
  The blue ice curdling on the stream.

December 7, 1838.

XXXI

THE night was dark, yet winter breathed
With softened sighs on Gondal's shore ;
And though its wind repining grieved,
It chained the snow-swollen streams no more.

How deep into the wilderness
My horse had strayed, I cannot say ;
But neither morsel nor caress
Would urge him farther on the way.

So loosening from his neck the rein,
I set my worn companion free,
And billowy hill and boundless plain
Full soon divided him from me.

The sullen clouds lay all unbroken
And blackening round the horizon drear,
But still they gave no certain token
Of heavy rain or tempest near.

I paused, confounded and distracted,
Down in the heath my limbs I threw ;
But wilder as I longed for rest,
More wakeful heart and eyelids grew.

It was about the middle night
And under such a starless dome,
When gliding from the mountains height,
I saw a shadowy spirit come.

Her wavy hair on her shoulders bare,
It shone like soft clouds round the moon ;
Her noiseless feet, like melting sleet,
Gleamed white a moment, then were gone.

'What seek you now on this bleak moor brow,
Where wanders that form from heaven descending?'
It was thus I said as her graceful head
The spirit above my couch was bending.

'This is my home where whirlwinds blow,
Where snowdrifts round my path are swelling ;
'Tis many a year, 'tis long ago,
Since I beheld another dwelling.

'When thick and fast the smothering blast
I 've welcomed the winter on the plain,
If my cheek grew pale in its loudest gale,
May I never tread the hills again.

'The shepherd had died on the mountain-side,
But my ready aid was near him then ;
I led him back o'er the hidden track
And gave him to his native glen.

'When tempests roar on the lonely shore
I light my beacon with seaweeds dry,
And it flings its fire through the darkness dire
And gladdens the sailor's hopeless eye.

'And the sea-birds noisy I love to keep,
Their timid forms to guard from harm ;
I have a spell, and they know it well,
And I save them with a powerful charm.

'Thy own good steed on his friendless bed
A few hours since you left to die ;
But I knelt by his side and the saddle untied,
And life returned to his glazing eye.

'To a silent home thy feet may come,
And years may follow of toilsome pain ;
But yet I swear by that burning tear,
The loved shall meet on its hearth again.'

January 12, 1839.

XXXII

THE ABSENT ONE

From our evening fireside now
Merry laugh and cheerful tone,
Smiling eye and cloudless brow,
Mirth and music all are flown.
Yet the grass before the door
Grows as green in April rain,
And as blithely as of yore
Larks have poured their daylong strain.

Is it fear or is it sorrow
Checks the frequent stream of joy?
Do we tremble that to-morrow
May our present peace destroy?

For past misery are we weeping?
What is past can hurt no more;
And the gracious heavens are keeping
Aid for that which lies before.

One is absent, and for one,
Cheerless, chill is our hearthstone.
One is absent, and for him
Cheeks are pale and eyes are dim.

Arthur, brother, Gondal's shore
Rested from the battle's roar;
Arthur, brother, we returned
Back to Desmond lost and mourned.

Thou didst purchase by thy fall
Home for us and peace for all;
Yet, how darkly dawned that day!
Dreadful was the price to pay!

Just as once, through sun and mist
I have climbed the mountain's breast,
Still my gun with certain aim
Brought to earth the fluttering game:

But the very dogs repined;
Though I called with whistle shrill,
Tay and Carlo lagged behind,
Looking backward o'er the hill.

Sorrow was not vocal then;
Mute their woe and my despair;
But the joy of life was flown—
He was gone, and we were lone.

So it is by morn and eve;
So it is in field and hall;
For the absent one we grieve;
One being absent, saddens all.

April 19, 1839.

XXXIII

TO A BLUEBELL

SACRED watcher, wave thy bells!
Fair hill flowers and woodland child,
Dear to me in deep green dells,
Dearest on the mountains wild.

Bluebell, even as all divine
I have seen my darling shine;
Bluebell, even as fair and frail
I have seen my darling fail.
Lift thy head and speak to me,
Soothing thoughts are breathed by thee.
Thus they whisper, 'Summer's sun
Lights me till my life is done;
Would I rather choose to die
Under winter's stormy sky?

Glad I bloom, and calm I fade,
Dews of heaven are round me staid;
Mourner, mourner, dry thy tears,
Sorrow comes with lengthened years.'

May 7, 1839.

XXXIV

THE busy day has hurried by,
And hearts greet kindred hearts once more ;
And swift the evening hours should fly,
But, what turns every gleaming eye
So often to the door?

And then so quick away?—And why
Does sudden silence chill the room?
And laughter sink into a sigh,
And merry words to whispers die,
And gladness change to gloom?

Oh, we are listening for a sound,
We know, shall ne'er be heard again ;
Sweet voices in the halls resound,
Fair forms, fond faces gather round,
But all in vain, in vain.

Their feet shall never waken more
The echoes in those galleries wide,
Nor dare the snow on mountain's brow,
Nor skim the river's frozen flow,
Nor wander down its side.

They who have been our life, our soul,
Through summer youth from childhood's spring,
Who bound us in one vigorous whole
To stand 'gainst Tyranny's control
For ever triumphing :

Who bore the brunt of battle's fray,
The first to fight, the last to fall,
Whose mighty minds with kindred lay,
Still led the van in glory's way ·
The idol chiefs of all.

They, they are gone! Not for a while,
As golden suns at night decline,
And e'en in death our grief beguile,
Foretelling with a rose-red smile
How bright the morn will shine.

No ; these dark towers are lone and lorn ;
This very crowd is vacancy ;
And we must watch and wait and mourn
And half look out for their return ;
And think their forms we see.

And fancy music in our ear,
Such as their lips could only pour,
And think we feel their presence near,
And start to find they are not here ;
And never shall be more!

June 14, 1839.

XXXV

And now the house-dog stretched once more
His limbs upon the glowing floor ;
The children half resume their play,
Though from the warm hearth scared away ;
The goodwife left her spinning-wheel
And spread with smiles the evening meal ;
The shepherd placed a seat and pressed
To their poor fare his unknown guest,
And he unclasped his mantle now,
And raised the covering from his brow,
Said, voyagers by land and sea
Were seldom feasted daintily,
And cheered his host by adding stern
He 'd no refinement to unlearn.
A silence settled on the room,
The cheerful welcome sank to gloom ;
But not those words, though cold or high,
So froze their hospitable joy.
No—there was something in his face,
Some nameless thing which hid not grace,
And something in his voice's tone
Which turned their blood as chill as stone.
The ringlets of his long black hair
Fell o'er a cheek most ghastly fair.
Youthful he seemed—but worn as they
Who spend too soon their youthful day.
When his glances dropped, 'twas hard to quell
Unbidden feelings' hidden swell ;

And Pity scarce her tears could hide,
So sweet that brow with all its pride.
But when upraised his eye would dart
An icy shudder through the heart,
Compassion changed to horror then,
And fear to meet that gaze again.
It was not hatred's tiger-glare,
Nor the wild anguish of despair ;
It was not either misery
Which quickens friendship's sympathy;
No—lightning all unearthly shone
Deep in that dark eye's circling zone,
Such withering lightning as we deem
None but a spirit's look may beam ;
And glad were all when he turned away
And wrapt him in his mantle grey,
And hid his head upon his arm,
And veiled from view his basilisk charm.

July 12, 1839, *E. J. Brontë.*

XXXVI

Come hither, child ; who gifted thee
With power to touch that string so well?
How daredst thou wake thoughts in me,
Thoughts that I would—but cannot quell !

Nay, chide not, lady ; long ago
I heard those notes in Elbe Hall,
And had I known they 'd waken woe,
I 'd weep their music to recall.

But thus it was one festal night,
When I was hardly six years old,
I stole away from crowds and light
And sought a chamber dark and cold.

I had no one to love me there,
I knew no comrade and no friend,
And so I went to sorrow where
Heaven only heaven could me fend.

Loud blew the wind. 'Twas sad to stay
From all that splendour round away.
I imaged in the lonely room
A thousand forms, a fearful gloom ;

And with my wet eyes raised on high,
I prayed to God that I might die.
Suddenly in the silence drear
A sound of music reached my ear :

And then a voice—I hear it yet—
So full of soul, so deeply sweet ;
I thought that Gabriel's self had come
To take me to my father's home.

Three times it rose, that solemn strain,
Then died away, nor came again ;
And still the words and still the tone
Dwell in their might when all alone.

July 19, 1839.

XXXVII

How long will you remain? The midnight hour
Has tolled its last stroke from the minster tower.
Come, come; the fire is dead, the lamp burns low;
Your eyelids droop, a weight is on your brow;
Your cold hands hardly hold the weary pen:
Come; morn will give recovered strength again.

No; let me linger; leave me, let me be
A little longer in this reverie:
I 'm happy now; and would you tear away
My blissful thought that never comes with day.

A vision dear, though false, for well my mind
Knows what a bitter waking waits behind.
Can there be pleasure in this shadowy room,
With windows yawning on intenser gloom,
And such a dreary wind so bleakly sweeping
Round walls where only you are vigil keeping?
Besides, your face has not a sign of joy,
And more than tearful sorrow fills your eye.
Look on those woods, look on that mountain lorn,
And think how changed they 'll be to-morrow morn:
The doors of heaven expanding bright and blue;
The leaves, the green grass, sprinkled with the dew;
And white mists rising on the river's breast,
And wild birds bursting from their songless nest,

And your own children's merry voices chasing
The phantom ghost that pleasure has been raising.
Aye speak of these ; but can you tell me why
Day breathes such beauty over earth and sky,
And waking sounds revive, restore again
To hearts that all night long have throbbed with pain?
Is it not that the sunshine and the wind
Lure from itself the woe-worn mind,
And all the joyous music breathing by,
And all the splendours of that cloudless sky,
Regive him shadowy gleams of infancy
And draw his tired gaze from futurity?

August 12, 1839.

XXXVIII

Fair sinks the summer evening now
In scattered glory round ;
The sky upon its holy brow
Wears not a cloud that speaks of gloom.

The old tower, shrined in golden light,
Looks down on the descending sun ;
So softly evening blends with night,
You scarce can say when day is done.

And this is just the joyous hour
When we were wont to burst away
T' escape from labour's tyrant power
And cheerfully go out to play.

Then why is all so sad and lone?
No merry footstep on the stair,
No laugh, no heart-awaking tone,
But voiceless silence everywhere.

I 've wandered round our garden ground,[1]
And still it seemed at every turn
That I should greet approaching feet,
And words upon the breezes hung.

[1] Stanzas 5 and 6 have been crossed out in the manuscript.

In vain, they will not come to-day,
And morning's beams will rise as drear.
Then tell me, are they gone for aye,
Or gleams the sun amongst the mists of care?

Be still, reviving hope doth say,
'Departed joys 'tis fond to mourn,
Think every storm that rides its way
Prepared a more divine return.

August 30, 1839.

XXXIX

THE wind I hear it sighing
With autumn's saddest sound ;
Withered leaves all thick are lying
As spring-flowers on the ground.

This dark night has won me
To wander far away ;
Old feelings gather fast upon me,
Like vultures round their prey.

Kind were they once and cherished,
But cold and cheerless now.
I would their lingering shades had perished
When their light left my brow.

'Tis like old age pretending
The softness of a child,
My altered, hardened spirit bending
To meet their fancies wild.

Yet could I with past pleasures
Past woe's oblivion buy,
That by the death of my dearest treasures
My deadliest pains might die ;

O then another daybreak
Might haply dawn above ;
Another summer gild my cheek,
My soul, another love.

October 23, 1839.

XL

That wind, I used to hear it swelling
With joy divinely deep;
You might have seen my hot tears welling,
But rapture made me weep.

I used to love on winter nights
To lie and dream alone
Of all the rare and real delights
My lonely years had known.

And oh! above the best of those
That coming time should bear,
Like heaven's own glorious stars they rose,
Still beaming bright and fair.

November 28, 1839.

XLI

Thy sun is near meridian height,
And my sun sinks in endless night;
But if that night bring only sleep,
Then I shall rest, while thou wilt weep.

And say not that my early tomb
Will give me to a darker doom;
Shall these long agonising years
Be punished by eternal tears?

No: that I feel can never be;
A God of *hate* could hardly bear
To watch through all eternity,
His own creation's dread despair!

The pangs that wring my mortal breast,
Must claim from Justice lasting rest;
Enough, that this departing breath
Will pass in anguish worse than death.

If I have sinned; long, long ago
That sin was purified by woe.
I have suffered on thro' night and day;
I 've trod a dark and frightful way.

Earth's wilderness was round me spread,
Heaven's tempests beat my naked head;
I did not kneel; in vain would prayer
Have sought one gleam of mercy there!

How could I ask for pitying love,
When that grim concave frowned above,
Hoarding its lightnings to destroy
My only and my priceless joy?

They struck—and long may Eden shine
Ere I would call its glories mine;
All Heaven's undreamt felicity
Could never blot the past from me.

No! Years may cloud and death may sever,
But what is done, is done for ever.
And thou false friend and treacherous guide
Go sate thy cruel heart with pride.

Go, load my memory with shame;
Speak but to curse my hated name;
My tortured limbs in dungeons bind,
And spare my life to kill my mind.

Leave me in chains and darkness now,
And when my very soul is worn,
When reason's light has left my brow,
And madness cannot feel thy scorn,

Then come again; thou wilt not shrink—
I know thy soul is free from fear—
The last full cup of triumph drink,
Before the blank of death be there.

The raving, dying victim see,
Lost, cursed, degraded all for thee!
Gaze on the wretch—recall to mind
His golden days left long behind.

Does Memory sleep in *Lethean* rest?
Or wakes its whisper in thy breast?
O Memory wake! Let scenes return,
That e'en her haughty heart must mourn!

Reveal; where o'er a lone green wood
The moon of summer pours
Far down from heaven its silver flood
On deep Eldenna's shores;

There, lingering in the wild embrace
Youth's warm affections gave,
She sits and fondly seems to trace
His features in the wave.

And while on that reflected face
Her eyes intently dwell;
'Fernando, sing to-night,' she says,
'The lays I love so well.'

He smiles and sings, through every air
Betrays the faith of yesterday;
His soul is glad to cast for her
Virtue and faith and Heaven away.

Well, thou hast paid me back my love!
But, if there be a God above,
Whose arm is strong, whose word is true,
This hell shall wring thy spirit too!

January 6, 1840.

XLII

FAR, far is mirth withdrawn ;
'Tis three long hours before the morn,
And I watch lonely, drearily ;
So come, thou shade, commune with me.

Deserted one ! thy corpse lies cold
And mingled with a foreign mould.
Year after year the grass grows green
Above the dust where thou hast been.

I will not name thy blighted name,
Tarnished by unforgotten shame,
Though not because my bosom torn
Joins the mad world in all its scorn.

Thy phantom face is dark with woe,
Tears have left ghastly traces there,
These ceaseless tears ! I wish their flow
Could quench thy wild despair.

They deluge my heart like the rain
On cursed Zamornah's howling plain.
Yet when I hear thy foes deride,
I must cling closely to thy side.

Our mutual foes ! They will not rest
From trampling on thy buried breast.
Glutting their hatred with the doom,
They picture thine beyond the tomb.

But God is not like human kind,
Man cannot read the Almighty mind;
Vengeance will never torture thee,
Nor hurt thy soul eternally.

Then do not in this night of grief,
This time of overwhelming fear,
O do not think that God can leave,
Forget, forsake, refuse to hear!

What have I dreamt? *He* lies asleep,
With whom my heart would vainly weep;
He rests, and *I* endure the woe,
That left his spirit long ago.

March 1840.

XLIII

It is too late to call thee now,
I will not nurse that dream again ;
For every joy that lit my brow
Would bring its after-storm of pain.

Besides the mist is half withdrawn,
The barren mountain-side lies bare,
And sunshine and awaking morn
Paint no more golden visions there.

Yet ever in my grateful breast
Thy darling shade shall cherished be ;
For God alone doth know how blessed
My early years have been in thee !

April 1840.

XLIV

If grief for grief can touch thee,
If answering woe for woe,
If any ruth can melt thee,
Come to me now!

I cannot be more lonely,
More drear I cannot be!
My worn heart throbs so wildly
'Twill break for thee.

And when the world despises,
When heaven repels my prayer,
Will not mine angel comfort?
Mine idol hear?

Yes, by the tears I 've poured,
By all my hours of pain,
O I shall surely win thee,
Beloved, again.

May 18, 1840.

XLV

GERALDINE

'Twas night, her comrades gathered all
Within their city's rocky wall ;
When flowers were closed and day was o'er
Their joyous hearts awoke the more.

But lonely in her distant cave
She heard the river's restless wave
Chafing its banks with dreamy flow,
Music for mirth and wail for woe.

Palm trees and cedars towering high
Deepened the gloom of evening's sky,
And thick did raven ringlets veil
Her forehead, drooped like lily pale.

Yet I could hear my lady sing ;
I knew she did not mourn ;
For never yet from sorrow's spring
Such witching notes were born.

Thus poured she in that cavern wild
The voice of feelings warm,
As bending o'er her beauteous child
She clasped its sleeping form.

'Why sank so soon the summer sun
From our Zedona's skies?
I was not tired, my darling one,
Of gazing in thine eyes.

'Methought the heaven, whence thou hast
come,
Was lingering there awhile;
And earth seemed such an alien home
They did not dare to smile.

'Methought each moment, something strange
Within their circles shone,
And yet, through every magic change,
They were my darling's own.

'Methought—what thought I not, sweet love?
My whole heart centred there;
I breathed not but to send above
One gush of ardent prayer.

'Bless it! My gracious God!' I cried.
'Preserve Thy mortal shrine,
For Thine own sake, be Thou its guide,
And keep it still divine—

'Say, sin shall never blanch that cheek,
Nor suffering change that brow.
Speak, in Thy mercy, Maker, speak,
And seal it safe from woe.

'Why did I doubt? In God's control
Our mutual fates remain,
And pure as now, my Angel's soul
Must go to heaven again.'

The revellers in the city slept,
My lady in her woodland bed;
I watching o'er her slumber wept,
As one who mourns the dead.

August 17, 1841.

XLVI

I SEE around me piteous tombstones grey
Stretching their shadows far away.
Beneath the turf my footsteps tread
Lie low and lone the silent dead;
Beneath the turf, beneath the mould,
For ever dark, for ever cold.
And my eyes cannot hold the tears
That memory hoards from vanished years.
For time and Death and mortal pain
Give wounds that will not heal again.
Let me remember half the woes
I've seen and heard and felt below,
And heaven itself, so pure and blest,
Could never give my spirit rest.
Sweet land of light! Thy children fair
Know nought akin to our despair;
Nor have they felt, nor can they tell
What tenants haunt each mortal cell,
What gloomy guests we hold within,
Torments and madness, tear and sin!
Well, may they live in ecstasy
Their long eternity of joy;
At least we would not bring them down
With us to weep, with us to groan.
No, Earth would wish no other sphere
To taste her cup of suffering drear;
She turns from heaven a tearless eye
And only mourns that *we* must die!

Ah mother, what shall comfort thee
In all this boundless misery?
To cheer our eager eyes awhile
We see thee smile, how fondly smile!
But who reads not through the tender glow
Thy deep, unutterable woe?
Indeed no darling land above
Can cheat thee of thy children's love.
We all in life's departing shine,
Our last dear longings blend with thine,
And struggle still and strive to trace
With clouded gaze thy darling face.
We would not leave our nature home
For *any* world beyond the tomb.
No, mother, on thy kindly breast
Let us be laid in lasting rest,
Or waken but to share with thee
A mutual immortality.

July 1841.

XLVII

ROSINA

Weeks of wild delirium past,
Weeks of fevered pain;
Rest from suffering comes at last;
Reason dawns again.

It was a pleasant April day
Declining to the afternoon;
Sunshine upon her pillow lay
As warm as middle June.

It told her unconsciously
Early spring had hurried by;
'Ah! Time has not delayed for me,'
She murmured with a sigh.

'Angora's hills have heard their tread,
The crimson flag is planted there;
Eldenna's waves are rolling red,
While I lie fettered here!

'Nay, rather, Gondal's shaken throne
Is now secure and free;
And my king Julius reigns alone
Debtless, alas! to me.'

Loud was the sudden gust of woe
From those who watch around;
Rosina turned and sought to know
Why burst that boding sound.

'What then, my dreams are false,' she said,
'Come, maidens, answer me;
Has Almadore in battle bled!
Have slaves subdued the free?

'I know it all; he could not bear
To leave me dying far away;
He fondly, madly lingered here
And we have lost the day!

But check those coward sobs, and bring
My robes, and smooth my tangled hair;
A noble victory you shall sing
For every hour's despair!

'When will he come? 'Twill soon be night;
We'll come when evening falls;
Oh! I shall weary for the light
To leave my lonely halls!'

She turned her pallid face aside,
As she would seek repose;
But dark Ambition's thwarted pride
Forbade her lips to close.

And still on all who waited by
Oppressive mystery hung ;
And swollen with grief was every eye,
And chained was every tongue.

They whispered nought, but, 'Lady, sleep,
Dear lady, slumber now !
Had we not bitter cause to weep
While you were laid so low ?

'And hope can hardly deck the cheek
With sudden signs of cheer,
When it has worn through many a week
The sting of anguish drear.'

Fierce grew Rosina's gloomy gaze ;
She cried, 'Dissembler, own
Erina's arms in victory blaze,
Brenzaida's crest is down.'

'Well, since it must be told, Lady,
Brenzaida's crest is down ;
Brenzaida's sun is set, Lady,
His empire overthrown !

'He died beneath his palace dome,
True heart on every side ;
Among his guards, within his home
Our glorious monarch died.

'I saw him fall, I saw the gore
From his heart's fountain swell,
And mingling on the marble floor
His murderer's life-blood fell.

'And now, 'mid northern mountains lone
His desert grave is made;
And, Lady, of your love alone
Remains a mortal shade!'

September 1, 1841.

XLVIII

In the same place, when nature wore
The same celestial glow,
I 'm sure I 've seen these forms before
But many springs ago ;

But only *he* had locks of light
And she had raven hair ;
While now, his curls are dark as night
And hers as morning fair.

Besides, I 've dreamt of tears whose traces
Will never more depart ;
Of agony that fast effaces
The verdure of the heart.

I dreamt one sunny day like this,
In this peerless month of May,
I saw her give th' unanswered kiss
As his spirit passed away.

Those young eyes that so sweetly shine
Then looked their last adieu,
And pale death changed that cheek divine
To his unchanging hue.

And earth was cast above the breast
That once beat warm and true,
Where her heart found a living rest
That moved responsively.

Then she, upon the covered grave,
The grass-grown grave, did lie,
A tomb not girt by English wave
Nor arched by English sky.

The sod was sparkling bright with dew,
But brighter still with tears;
That welled from mortal grief, I knew
Which never heals with years.

And if he came not for her woe,
He would not now return;
He would not leave his sleep below,
When she had ceased to mourn.

O Innocence, that cannot live
With heart-wrung anguish long,
Dear childhood's innocence forgive,
For I have done thee wrong!

The bright rosebuds, those hawthorn shrouds
Within their perfumed bower,
Have never closed beneath a cloud,
Nor bent beneath a shower.

Had darkness once obscured their sun
Or kind dew turned to rain,
No storm-cleared sky that ever shone
Could win such bliss again.

May 17, 1842.

XLIX

ASPIN CASTLE

How do I love on summer night
To sit within this Norman door,
Whose sombre portal hides the light,
Thickening above me evermore.

How do I love to hear the flow
Of Aspin's water murmuring low,
And hours long listen to the breeze
That sighs in Beckden's waving trees.

To-night there is no wind to wake
One ripple in the lovely lake;
To-night the clouds, subdued and grey,
Starlight and moonlight shut away.

'Tis calm and still and almost drear,
So utter is the solitude;
But still I love to linger here,
And form my mood to Nature's mood.

There 's a wild walk beneath the rocks
Following the bend of Aspin's side,
'Tis worn by feet of mountain-flocks
That wander down to drink the tide.

Never by cliff and gnarlèd tree
Wound fairy path so sweet to me;
Yet of the native shepherds none,
In open day and cheerful sun,
Will tread its labyrinths alone.

Far less when evening's pensive hour
Hushes the bird and shuts the flower,
And gives to fancy magic power
O'er each familiar tower.

For round their hearths they 'll tell this tale,
And every listener swears it true;
How wanders there a phantom pale
With spirit-eyes of dreamy blue.

It always walks with head declined,
The long curls wave not in the wind;
Its face is fair—divinely fair;
But always on that angel brow
Rests such a shade of deep despair,
As nought divine could ever know.

How oft in twilight lingering lone,
I 've stood to watch that phantom rise,
And seen in mist and moonlit stone,
Its gleaming hair and solemn eyes.

The ancient men in secret say
'Tis the first chief of Aspin grey
That haunts his feudal home;
But why around that alien grave,
Three thousand miles beyond the wave,
Where his exiled ashes lie,
Under the cope of England's sky,
Doth he not rather roam?

I 've seen his picture in the hall,
It hangs upon an eastern wall;
And often when the sun declines
That picture like an angel shines.
And when the moonbeam still and blue
Streams the spectral windows through
That picture 's like a spectral too.

The hall is full of portraits rare,
Beauty and mystery mingle there;
At his right hand an infant fair
Looks from its golden frame;
And just like his its ringlets bright,
Its large dark eyes of shadowy light,
Its cheek's pure hue, its forehead white,
And like its noble name.

Daughter divine! and could his gaze
Fall coldly on thy peerless face?
And did he never smile to see
Himself restored to infancy?

Never put back that golden flow
  Of curls; and kiss that pearly brow,
And feel no other earthly bliss
  Was equal to that parent's kiss?

No; turn towards the western side.
  There stands Sidonia's deity!
In all her glory, all her pride!
  And truly like a god she seems,
Some lad of wild enthusiast's dream.
  And this is she for whom he died!
For whom his spirit unforgiven
  Wanders unsheltered, shut from heaven,
An outcast for eternity.

Those eyes are dust, those lips are clay,
  That form is mouldered all away;
Nor thought, nor sense, nor pulse, nor breath;
  The whole devoured and lost in death!

There is no worm however mean,
  That living, is not nobler now
Than she—Lord Alfred's idol queen,
  So loved—so worshipped long ago.

O come away! The Norman door
  Is silenced with a sudden shine;
Come, leave these dreams o'er things of yore,
  And turn to Nature's face divine.

O'er wood and wold—o'er flood and fell,
O'er flashing lake and gleaming dell,
The harvest-moon looks down ;
When Heaven smiles with love and light,
And earth looks back so dazzling bright
On such a scene, on such a night
Earth's children should not frown.

February 6, 1843.

L

ON THE FALL OF ZALONA

All blue and bright in golden light
The morn comes marching on,
And now Zalona's steeples white
Glow golden in the sun.

This day might be a festal day;
The streets are crowded all,
And emerald flags stream broad and gay
From turret, tower and wall.

And hark! how music evermore
Is sounding in the sky;
The deep bells boom, the cannon roar,
The trumpets sound on high.

The deep bells boom, the deep bells clash,
Upon the reeling air,
The cannon with unceasing crash
Make answer far and near.

What do these brazen tongues proclaim?
What joyous fête begun,
What offering to our country's fame,
What noble victory won?

Go, ask that solitary sire
  Laid in his house alone ;
His silent hearth without a fire,
  His sons and daughters gone.

Go, ask those children in the street
  Beside their mother's door ;
Waiting to hear the lingering feet
  That they shall hear no more.

Ask those pale soldiers round the gate
  With famine-kindled eye.
They say, 'Zalona celebrates
  The day that she must die.'

The charger by his manger tied
  Has wasted many a day ;
Yet ere the spur hath touched his side,
  Behold he sinks away !

And hungry dogs with wolflike cry
  Unburied corpses tear,
While their gaunt masters gaze and sigh
  And scarce the feast forbear.

Now, look down from Zalona's wall ;
  There war the unwearied foe ;
If ranks beneath the cannon fall,
  New ranks for ever grow.

And many a week, unbroken thus
Their troops our ramparts hem ;
And for each man that fights for us
A hundred fights for them !

Courage and right and spotless Truth
Were pitched 'gainst traitorous crime ;
We offered all, our age, our youth,
Our brave men in their prime.

And all have failed ! the fervent prayers,
The trust in heavenly aid ;
Valour and Faith and sealèd tears,
That would not mourn the dead.

Lips, that did breathe no murmuring word ;
Hearts, that did ne'er complain ;
Though vengeance held a sheathèd sword
And martyrs bled in vain.

Alas, alas, the myrtle bowers
By blighting blasts destroyed !
Alas, the lily's withered flowers
That leave our garden void !

Unfolds o'er tower, and waves o'er height,
A sheet of crimson sheen,
Is it the setting sun's red light
That stains our standard green ?

Heaven help us in this awful hour!
For now might Faith decay.
Now might we doubt God's guardian power
And curse instead of pray.

He will not even let us die,
Not let us die at home;
The foe must see our soldiers fly
As they had feared the tomb!

Because we *dare* not stay to gain
Those longed-for, glorious graves,
We dare not shrink from slavery's chain
To leave our children slaves!

But when this scene of awful woe
Has neared its final close,
As God forsook our armies, so
May He forsake our foes!

February 24, 1843.

LI

GRAVE IN THE OCEAN

WHERE beams the sun the brightest
In the hours of sweet July?
Where falls the snow the lightest
From bleak December's sky?

Where can the weary lay his head,
And lay it soft the while;
In a grave that never shuts its dead
From heaven's benignant smile?

Upon the earth is sunlight;
Spring grass grows green and fair;
But beneath the earth is midnight—
Eternal midnight there.

Then why lament that those we love
Escape earth's dungeon tomb?
As if the flowers that blow above
Could charm its undergloom.

From morning's faintest dawning
Till evening's deepest shade,
Thou wilt not cease thy mourning
To know where she is laid.

But if to weep above her grave
Be such a priceless boon,
Go, shed thy tears in Ocean's wave
And they will reach it soon.

Yet midst thy wild repining,
Mad though that anguish be,
Think heaven on her is shining
Even as it shines on thee.

With thy mind's vision pierce the deep,
Look now she rests below,
And tell me, why such blessed sleep
Should cause such bitter woe?

May 1, 1843.

LII

A SERENADE

THY Guardians are asleep,
So I 'm come to bid thee rise ;
Thou hast a holy vow to keep,
Ere yon crescent quit the skies.

Though clouds careering wide
Will hardly let her gleam,
She 's bright enough to be our guide
Across the mountain stream.

O waken, dearest, wake !
What means this long delay?
Say, wilt thou not for true love's sake
Chase idol fears away?

Think not of future grief
Entailed on present joy ;
An age of woe were only brief
Its memory to destroy.

And neither Hell nor Heaven,
Though both conspire at last,
Can take the bliss that has been given,
Can rob us of the past.

Then waken, Mary, wake,
  How canst thou linger now?
For true love's and for honour's sake
  Arise and keep thy vow.

May 4, 1843.

LIII

At such a time, in such a spot,
The world seems made of light,
Our blissful hearts remember not
How surely follows night.

I cannot, Alfred, dream of aught,
That casts a shade of woe ;
That heaven is reigning in my thought,
Which wood and wave and earth have caught
From skies that ever flow.

That heaven which my sweet lover's brow
Has won me to adore,
Which from his blue eyes beaming now
Reflects a still intenser glow
Than Native's heaven can pour.

I know our souls are all divine,
I know that when we die
What seems the vilest, even like thine
A part of God himself shall shine
In perfect purity.

But coldly breaks November's day ;
Its changes, charmless all,
Unmarked, unloved, they pass away :
We do not wish one hour to stay
Nor sigh at evening's fall.

And glorious is the gladsome rise
Of June's rejoicing morn ;
And who with unregretful eyes
Can watch the lustre leave its skies
To twilight's shade forlorn?

Then art thou not my golden June,
All mist and tempest free?
As shines earth's sun in summer noon
So heaven's sun shines in thee.

Let others seek its beams divine
In cell and cloister drear ;
But I have found a fairer shrine
And happier worship here.

By dismal rites they win their bliss,
By penance, fasts and fears ;
I have one rite—a gentle kiss ;
One penance—tender tears.

O could it thus for ever be,
That I might so adore ;
I 'd ask for all eternity,
To make a paradise for me,
My love—and nothing more.

July 28, 1843.

LIV

RODERIC

Lie down and rest, the fight is done,
  Thy comrades to the camp retire ;
Gaze not so earnestly upon
  The far gleam of the beacon fire.

O list not to the wind-born sounds,
  Of music and of soldiers' cheer ;
Thou canst not go—remember wounds
  Exhaust thy life and hold thee here.

Had that hand power to raise the sword
  Which since this morn laid many low ;
Had that tongue strength to speak the word,
  That urged thy followers on the foe ;

Were that warm blood within thy veins
  Which now upon the earth is flowing,
Splashing its sod with crimson stains,
  Redding the pale heath round thee growing ;

Then Roderic, thou mightst still be turning
  With eager eye and anxious breast
To where those signal lights are burning,
  To where thy war-worn comrades rest.

But never more—look up and see
The twilight fading from the skies,
That last dim beam that sets for thee,
Roderic, for thee shall never rise!

December 18, 1843.

LV

'Twas yesterday at early dawn
I watched the falling snow ;
A drearier scene on winter morn
Was never stretched below.

I could not see the mountains round,
But I knew by the wind's wild roar,
How every drift in their glens profound
Was deepening ever more.

And then I thought of Ula's bowers,
Beyond the southern sea,
Her tropic prairies bright with flowers,
And rivers wandering free.

I thought of many a happy day
Spent in her Eden Isle
With my dear comrades young and gay,
All scattered now so far away,
But not forgot the while !

Who, that has breathed that heavenly air,
To northern climes would come,
To Gondal's mists and moorlands drear,
And sleet and frozen gloom ?

Spring brings the swallow and the lark,
  But what will winter bring?
Its twilight hours and evenings dark
  To match the gift of spring?

No, look with me o'er that swollen main;
  If my spirit's eye can see,
There are brave ships floating back again
That no calm southern port can chain
  From Gondal's stormy sea.

Oh! how the hearts of voyagers beat
  To feel the frost-wind blow!
What follows in Ula's garden sweet
  Is worth one flake of snow.

The blast which almost rends their sail
  Is welcome as a friend;
It brings them home, that thundering gale
  Home to their journey's end;

Home to our souls whose wearying sighs
  Lament their absence drear;
And oh, how bright even winter skies
  Would shine if they were here!

December 19, 1843.

LVI

THIS summer wind with thee and me
Roams in the dawn of day ;
But thou must be, when it shall be,
Ere evening—far away.

The farewell's echo from thy soul
Should not depart before
Hills rise and distant rivers roll
Between us evermore.

I know that I have done thee wrong,
Have wronged both thee and Heaven ;
And I may mourn my lifetime long
And may not be forgiven.

Repentant tears will vainly fall
To cover deeds untrue,
For by no grief can I recall
The dreary word adieu !

Yet thou a future peace shalt win,
Because thy soul is clear ;
And I who had the heart to sin
Will find a heart to bear.

Till far beyond earth's frenzied strife,
That makes destruction joy,
Thy perished faith shall spring to life,
And my remorse shall die.

March 2, 1844.

LVII

WERE they shepherds, who sat all day
On that brown mountain's side?
But neither staff nor dog had they,
Nor woolly flock to guide.

They were clothed in savage attire;
Their locks were dark and long;
And at each belt a weapon dire,
Like bandit-knife was hung.

One was a woman tall and fair;
A princess she might be
From her stately form and her features rare,
And her look of Majesty.

But, oh! she had a sullen frown,
A lip of cruel scorn;
As sweet tears never melted down
Her cheeks since she was born.

'Twas well she had no sceptre to wield,
No subject land to sway;
Fear might have made her vassals yield,
But love had been far away.

Yet love was ever at her feet
In his most burning mood;
That love, which will the wicked greet
As kindly as the good.

And *he* was noble too, who bowed
So humbly by her side;
Entreating, till his eyes o'erflowed,
Her spirits icy proud.

'Angelica, from my very birth
I have been nursed in strife;
And lived upon this weary Earth
A wanderer, all my life.

'The baited tiger could not be
So much athirst for gore,
For men and laws have tortured me,
Till I can bear no more.

'The guiltless blood upon my hands
Will shut me out from heaven,
And here, and even in foreign lands,
I cannot find a haven.

'And in all space and in all clime,
And through eternity,
To aid a spirit lost in crime,
I have no hope but thee.

'Yet I will swear, no saint on high
A truer faith could prove;
No angel from that holy sky
Could give thee purer love.

'For thee thro' never-ending years
I'd suffer endless pain;
But only give me back my tears,
Return my love again!'

Many a time, unheeded, thus
The reckless man would pray;
But something woke an answering flush
On his lady's brow to-day;
And her eye flashed flame, as she turned to speak
In concord with her reddening cheek.

'I've known a hundred kinds of love;
All made the loved one rue;
And what is thine that it should prove
Than other love, more true?

'Listen! I've known a burning heart,
To which my own was given;
Nay, not with passion, do not start,
Our love was love from heaven:
At least if heavenly love be born
In the pure light of childhood's morn,
Long ere the poison-tainted air
From this world's plague—few rises there;

That heart was a tropic sun,
That kindles all it shines upon ;
And never Fejian devotee
Gave worship half so warm as I ;
And never radiant bow could be
So welcome in a stormy sky.

'My soul dwelt with me day and night,
She was my all-sufficient light ;
My childhood's mate, my girlhood's guide,
My only blessing, only Pride.

'But cursèd be the very earth
That gave that friend her fatal birth !
With her own hand she bent the bow,
That laid my best affections low,
Then mocked my grief and scorned my prayers,
And drowned my bloom of youth in tears.
Warnings, reproaches, both were vain ;
What recked she of another's pain ?
My dearer self she would not spare ;
From Honour's voice she turned his ear ;
First made her love his only stay,
And then snatched the treacherous prop away.

'Douglas, he pleaded bitterly,
He pleaded, as *you* plead to me,
For lifelong chains, or timeless tomb,
Or any, but an exile's doom.

We both were scorned, both sternly driven
To shelter 'neath a foreign heaven ;
And darkens o'er that dreary time
A wildering dream of frenzied crime.

'I would not now those days recall ;
The oath within that caverned hall,
And its fulfilment ; these you know,
We both together struck the blow ;
But you can never know the pain
That my lost heart did then sustain,
When, severed wide by guiltless gore,
I felt that *one* could live no more !
Back maddening thought ! the grave is deep
Where my Amedeus lies asleep,
And I have long forgot to weep.

'Now hear me ; in these regions wild
I saw to-day my enemy.
Unarmed, as helpless as a child,
She slumbered on a sunny lea ;
Two friends ; no other guard had she ;
And they were wandering on the braes ;
And chasing, in regardless glee,
The wild goat o'er his dangerous ways.

'My hand was raised, my knife was bare ;
With stealthy tread I stole along,
But a wild bird sprang from his hidden lair,
And woke her with a sudden song ;

'Yet moved she not; she only raised
Her lids and on the bright sun gazed,
And uttered such a dreary sigh;
I thought just then she should not die,
Since misery was such misery.

'Now Douglas, for our hunted band,
For future joy and former woe,
Assist me with thy heart and hand
To send to hell my mortal foe.
Her friends fade first, that she may drain
A deeper cup of bitterer pain;
Yonder they stand and watch the waves
Dash in among the echoing caves.
Their farewell sight of earth and sea;
Come, Douglas, rise and go with me.'

. . . . . .

The lark sang clearly overhead,
And sweetly hummed the bee;
And softly round their dying bed
The wind blew from the sea.

Fair Surry would have raised her eyes
To see that water shine;
To see once more in mountain skies
The summer sun decline;

But ever on her fading cheek
The languid lid would close,
As weary that such sight should break
Its much-desired repose.

And she was waning fast away—
Even Memory's voice grew dim ;
Her former life's eventful day
Had dwindled to a dream ;

And hardly could her mind recall
The thought of joy or pain ;
That cloud was gathering over all
Which never clears again ;

In vain—in vain—you need not gaze
Upon those features now !
That sinking head you need not raise,
Nor kiss that pulseless brow.

Let out the grief that shakes your breath ;
Lord Lesley, let it free ;
The sternest eye for such a death
Might fill with sympathy.

The tresses, o'er her bosom spread,
Were by a faint breeze blown ;
'Her heart is beating,' Lesley said,
'She is not really gone.'

And still that form he fondly pressed,
And still of hope he dreamed,
Nor marked how from his own young
breast
Life's crimson current streamed.

At last the sunshine left the ground,
The laden bee flew home,
The deep-down sea with sudden sound
Impelled its waves to foam.

The corse grew heavy on his arm,
The starry heaven grew dim,
The summer night so mild and warm
Felt wintry chill to him.

A troubled shadow o'er his eye
Came down, and rested there ;
The moors and sky went swimming by,
Confused and strange and drear.

He faintly prayed, 'O Death, delay
Thy last fell dart to throw,
Till I can hear my sovereign say
The traitors' heads are low !

'God ! guard her life, since not to me
That dearest boon was given ;
God ! bless her sun with victory,
Or bless not me with heaven !'

Then came the cry of agony,
The pang of parting pain ;
And he had overpassed the sea,
That none can pass again.

. . . . .

Douglas leaned above the well ;
Heather banks around him rose ;
Bright and warm the sunshine fell
On that spot of sweet repose.

With the blue heaven bending o'er
And the soft wind singing by,
And the clear stream evermore
Mingling harmony.

On the shady side reclined
He watched its waters play,
And sound and sight had well combined
To banish gloom away.

A voice spoke near. 'She'll come,' it said,
And, Douglas ! thou shalt be
My love, altho' the very dead
Should rise to rival thee !

'Now only let thine arm be true,
And nerved, like mine, to kill ;
And Gondal's royal race shall rue
This day on Elmor Hill ! ! !'

They wait not long, the rustling heath
Betrays their royal foe ;
With hurried step and panting breath,
And cheek almost as white as death,
Augusta sprang below.

Yet marked she not where Douglas lay,
She only saw the well ;
The tiny fountain, churning spray
Within its mossy cell.

'Oh ! I have wrongs to pay,' she said ;
'Give life, give vigour now.'
And stooping by the water's side
She drank the crystal flow.

And brightly with that draught came back
The glory of her matchless eye
As glancing o'er the moorland track,
She shook her head impatiently.

Nor shape—nor shade—the mountain flocks
Quietly fed in grassy dells ;
Nor sound, except the distant rocks
Echoing to their bells.

She turns—she meets the murderer's gaze ;
Her own is scorched with a sudden blaze.
The blood streams down her brow ;
The blood streams through her coal-black hair,
She strikes it off with little care ;
She scarcely feels the flow ;
For she has marked and known him too,
And his own heart's ensanguined dew
Must slake her vengeance now !

False friend ! no tongue save thine can tell
The mortal strife that then befell ;

But, ere night darkened down
The stream in silence sang once more
And on its green bank, bathed in gore,
Augusta lay alone!

False Love! no earthly eye did see,
Yet heaven's pure eye regarded thee,
Where thy own Douglas bled;
How thou didst turn in mockery
From his last hopeless agony,
And leave the hungry hawk to be
Sole watcher of the dead!

. . . . . .

Was it a deadly swoon?
Or was her spirit really gone?
And the cold corse beneath the moon
Laid like another mass of dust and stone?

The moon was full that night,
The sky was almost light like day;
You might have seen the pulses play
Upon her forehead white;

You might have seen the dear, dear light of life
In her uncovered eye;
And her cheek changing in the mortal strife
Betwixt the pain to live and agony to die.

But nothing mutable was there!
The face, all deadly fair,

Showed a fixed impress of keen suffering past,
And the raised lids did show
No wandering gleam below
But a dark anguish, self-destroyed at last.

Long he gazed and held his breath,
Kneeling on the blood-stained heath;
Long he gazed those lids beneath,
Looking into Death!

Not a word from his followers fell;
They stood by mute and pale;
That black treason uttered well
Its own heart-harrowing tale.

But earth was bathed in other gore;
There were crimson drops across the moor,
And Lord Eldred glancing round,
Saw those tokens on the ground.

'Bring him back!' he hoarsely said;
'Wounded is the traitor fled;
Vengeance may hold but minutes brief
And you have all your lives for grief.'

He is left alone—he sees the stars
Their quiet course continuing:
And, far away, down Elmor scars
He hears the stream its waters fling;

That lulling monotone did sing
Of broken rock and shaggy glen ;
Of welcome for the moorcock's wing,
But not of wail for men !

Nothing of heaven or earth to show
One sign of sympathising woe,
And nothing but that agony
In her now unconscious eye,
To weigh upon the labouring breast
And prove she did not pass at rest.

But he who watched in thought had gone,
Retracing back her lifetime flown ;
Like sudden ghosts, to memory came
Full many a face, and many a name,
Full many a heart, that in the tomb,
He almost deemed, might have throbbed again
Had they but known her dreary doom,
Had they but seen their idol then,
A wreck of desolate despair,
Left to the wild birds of the air,
And mountain winds and rain !
For him—no tear his stern eye shed
As he looked down upon the dead.

'Wild morn,' he thought, 'and doubtful noon ;
But yet it was a glorious sun,
Though comet-like its course was run ;
That sun should never have been given
To burn and dazzle in the heaven
Or night has quenched it far too soon !

'And thou art gone—with all thy pride;
Thou, so adored, so dignified!
Cold as the earth, unweeting now
Of love, or joy, or mortal woe.

'For what thou wert I would not grieve,
But much for what thou wert to be;
That life so stormy and so brief,
That death has wronged us more than thee.

'Thy passionate youth was nearly past,
The opening sea seemed smooth at last;
Yet vainly flowed the calmer wave
Since fate had not decreed to save.

'And vain too must the sorrow be
Of those who live to mourn for thee;
But Gondal's foe shall not complain
That thy dear blood was poured in vain.'

May 1844.

LVIII

Rosina, this had never been
Except for you, my dearest queen!
Except for you the billowy sea
Would now be tossing under me.
The wind's wild voice my bosom thrill
And my glad heart bound wilder still.

Flying before the rapid gale,
Those wondrous southern Isles to hail,
Which wait for my companions free,
But thank your passion—not for me!

You know too well—and so do I,
Your naughty beauty's sovereignty,
Yet have I read these falcon eyes,
Have dived into their mysteries,
Have studied long their glance and feel
It is not love those eyes reveal.

They flash, they beam with lightning shine,
But not with such fond fire as mine;
The tender star fades faint and wan
Before Ambition's scorching sun.
So deem I now—and time will prove
If I have wronged Rosina's love.

November 11, 1844.

LIX

I KNOW that to-night the wind it is sighing,
The soft August wind, over forest and moor ;
While I in a grave-like chill am lying
On the damp black flags of my dungeon floor.

I know that the harvest-moon is shining ;
She neither will soar nor wane for me ;
Yet I weary, weary, with vain repining,
One gleam of her heaven-bright face to see.

For this constant darkness is wasting the gladness,
Fast wasting the gladness of life away ;
It gathers up thoughts akin to madness,
That never would cloud the world of day.

I chide with my soul—I bid it cherish
The feelings it lived on when I was free,
But sighing it murmurs, 'Let memory perish,
Forget, for my friends have forgotten me.'

Alas! I did think that they were weeping
Such tears as I weep—it is not so!
Their careless young eyes are closed in sleeping ;
Their brows are unshadowed, undimmed by woe.

Might I go to their beds, I 'd rouse that slumber,
My spirit should startle their rest and tell,
How hour after hour, I wakefully number,
Deep buried from light in my lonely cell!

Yet let them dream on; tho' dreary dreaming
Would haunt my pillow if *they* were here;
And *I* were laid warmly under the gleaming
Of that guardian moon and her comrade star.

Better that I my own fate mourning,
Should pine alone in this prison gloom;
Then waken free on the summer morning
And feel they were suffering this awful doom.

August 1845.

LX

A THOUSAND sounds of happiness
And only one of real distress,
One hardly uttered groan ;
But that has hushed all vocal joy,
Eclipsed the glory of the sky,
And made me think that misery
Rules in our world alone !

About his face the sunshine glows,
And in his hair the south wind blows,
And violet and wild woodrose
Are sweetly breathing near ;
Nothing without suggests dismay,
If he could force his mind away
From tracking farther day by day,
The desert of despair.

Too truly agonised to weep,
His eyes are motionless as sleep ;
His frequent sighs, long-drawn and deep,
Are anguish to my ear.
And I would soothe—but can I call
The cold corpse from its funeral pall,
And cause a gleam of hope to fall
With my consoling tear?

O Death! So many spirits driven
Through this false world, their all had given
To win the everlasting haven
For sufferers so divine:
Why didst thou smite the loved, the blest,
The ardent, and the happy breast,
That full of life desired not rest,
And shrank appalled from thine?

At least, since thou wilt not restore,
In mercy launch one arrow more;
Life's conscious death it wearies sore,
It tortures worse than thee.
Enough if storms have bowed his head,
Grant him at last a quiet bed
Beside his early stricken dead;
Even where he yearns to be!

April 22, 1845.

LXI

Come walk with me,
There 's only thee,
To bless my spirit now.
We used to love on winter nights
To wander through the snow.
Can we not woo back old delights?
The clouds rush dark and wild ;
They fleck with shade our mountains bright
The same as long ago,
And on the horizon rest at last
In looming masses piled ;
While moonbeams fleet and fly so fast
We scarce can say they smiled.

Come walk with me, come walk with me,
We were not once so few ;
But death has stolen our company,
As sunshine steals the dew.
He took them one by one, and we
Are left, the only two ;
So closer would my feelings twine
Because they have no stay but thine.

'Nay, call me not ; it may not be ;
Is human love so true?
Can friendship's flower droop for years
And then revive anew?

No ; though the soil be wet with tears,
  How fair soe'er it grew ;
The vital sap once perished
  Will never flow again.
And surer than that dwelling dread,
The narrow dungeon of the dead,
  Time parts the heart of men.

LXII

I 'M standing in the forest now,
The place, the hour the same;
And here the green leaves shed a glow,
And there, down in that lake below,
The tiny ripples flame.

The breeze sings like a summer breeze
Should sing in summer skies,
And heavenlike wide and tentlike trees
In mingled glory rise.

The murmur of their boughs and leaves
Speaks pride as well as bliss,
And that blue heaven expanding seems
The circling hills to kiss.

But where is he to-day, to-day?
No whisper, not to me;
I will not question, only say
Where may thy lover be?

Is he upon some distant shore,
Or is he on the sea?
Or is the heart thou dost adore
A faithless heart to thee?

The heart I love and you deride
Is changeless as the grave,
And neither foreign lands divide,
Nor yet the ocean's wave.

Then why should trouble cloud that brow
  And tears those eyes bedim?
Reply this once—is it that thou
  Hast faithless been to him?

I dreamt one dark and stormy night
  When winter winds were wild . . .
. . . . . .

LXIII

O HINDER me by no delay!
My horse is weary of the way,
And still his breast must stem the tide
Whose waves are foaming far and wide.
Leagues off I heard their thundering roar,
As fast they burst upon the shore;
A stronger steed than mine might dread
To brave them in their boiling bed.

Thus spoke the traveller, but in vain;
The stranger would not turn away,
Still clung she to his bridle rein
And still entreated him to stay.

Here with my knee upon the stone
I bid adieu to feelings gone;
I leave with thee my tears and pain,
And rush into the world again.

O come again! what chains withhold
The steps that used so fleet to be?
Come, leave thy dwelling dark and cold,
Once more to visit me.

Was it with the fields of green,
Blowing flower and budding tree,
With the summer heaven serene,
That thou didst visit me?

No ; 'twas not the flowery plain :
No ; 'twas not the fragrant air ;
Summer skies will come again,
But thou wilt not be there.

. . . . . .

How loud the storm sounds round the hall !
From arch to arch, from door to door,
Pillar and roof and granite wall
Rock like a cradle in its roar.

The elm-tree by the haunted well
Greets no returning summer skies ;
Down with a rush the giant fell
And stretched across the path it lies.

Hardly had passed the funeral train,
So long delayed by wind and snow ;
And how they 'll reach the house again
To-morrow's sun perhaps will show.

. . . . . .

What use is it to slumber here,
Though the heart be sad and weary ?
What use is it to slumber here,
Though the day rise dark and dreary ?

For that mist may break when the sun is high,
And this soul forget its sorrow,
And the rosy ray of the closing day
May promise a brighter morrow.

. . . . . .

O evening, why is thy light so sad?
Why is the sun's last ray so cold?
Hush! our smile is as ever glad,
But my heart is growing old.

LXIV

It was night, and on the mountains
Fathoms deep the snowdrifts lay ;
Streams and waterfalls and fountains
Down the darkness stole away.

Long ago the hopeless peasant
Left his sheep all buried there,
Sheep that through the summer pleasant
He had watched with tend'rest care.

Now no more a cheerful ranger
Following pathways known of yore
Sad he stood, a wild-eyed stranger,
On his own unbounded moor.

LXV

And first an hour of mournful musing,
And then a gush of bitter tears ;
And then a dreary calm diffusing
Its deadly mist o'er joys and cares.

And then a throb and then a lightening,
And then a wakening from above ;
And then a star in heaven brightening
The star, the glorious star of love.

. . . . .

Wind, sink to rest in the heather,
Thy wild voice suits not me ;
I would have dreary weather,
But all devoid of thee.

Sun set from that evening heaven,
Thy glad smile wins not mine ;
If light at all is given,
O give me Cynthia's shine !

. . . . .

Long neglect has worn away
Half the sweet, the haunting smile ;
Time has turned the bloom to grey,
Mould and damp the face defile.

But that lock of silky hair,
Still beneath the picture twined,
Tells what once those features were,
Paints her image on the mind.

Fair the hand that traced that line,
'Dearest, ever deem me true';
Swiftly flew the fingers fine
When the pen that motto drew.

Awaking morning laughs from heaven
On golden summer's forests green,
And what a gust of song is given
To welcome in that light serene!

A fresh wind waves the clustering roses
And through the open window sighs
Around the couch where she reposes,
The lady with the dovelike eyes;

With dovelike eyes and shining hair,
And velvet cheek so sweetly moulded;
And hands so white and soft and fair
Above her snowy bosom folded.

. . . . .

Her sister's and her brother's feet
Are brushing off the scented dew,
And she springs up in haste to greet
The grass and flowers and sunshine too.

LXVI

Had there been falsehood in my breast
No doubt had marr'd my word ;
This spirit had not lost its rest,
These tears had never flowed.

I gazed upon the cloudless moon
And loved her all the night,
Till morning came and radiant noon,
And I forgot her light.

No, not forgot eternally
Beneath its mighty glare :
But could the day seem dark to me
Because the night was fair?

July 26, 1843.

LXVII

YES, holy be thy resting-place
Wherever thou mayst lie ;
The sweetest winds breathe on thy face
The softest of the sky.

And will not guardian angels send
Kind dreams and thoughts of love,
Though I no more may watchful bend
Thy loved repose above ?

And will not heaven itself bestow
A beam of glory there,
That summer's grass more green may grow,
And summer's flowers more fair ?

Farewell, farewell ; 'tis hard to part,
Yet, loved one, it must be :
I would not rend another heart,
Not even with blessing thee.

Go ! we must break affection's chain,
Forget the hopes of years :
Nay, grieve not—wouldest thou remain
To waken wilder tears ?

This heart burns with thee and me,
Loves it the dreaming day :
But thou shouldst be where it shall be
Ere evening, far away.

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

These Poems, the copyright of the Editors, have never before been printed.

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

I

Gods of the old mythology
  Arise in gloom and storm ;
Adramalec, bow down thy head,
  Reveal, dark fiend, thy form,
The giant sons of Anakim
  Bowed lowest at thy shrine,
And thy temple rose in Argola,
  With its hallowed groves of vine ;
And there was eastern incense burnt,
  And there were garments spread,
With the fine gold decked and broidered,
  And tinged with radiant red,
With the radiant red of furnace flames
  That through the shadows shone
As the full moon when on Sinai's top
  Her rising light is thrown.

II

Its faded buds already lie
To deck my coffin when I die.
Bring them here—'twill not be long,
'Tis the last line of the woeful song ;
And the final and dying words are sung
To the discord of lute-strings all unstrung.
O Adrian, do not harshly sweep
The chords that are quivering to voiceless sleep.
No ; but I'd string them once more to a sound
That should startle the nations that rest around.
I 'd call forth the glorious chorus again
Which flooded the earth with a bloody main.
Have I crushed you, Percy? I 'd raise once more
The beacon-light on the rocky shore.
Percy, my love is so true and deep,
That though kingdoms should wail and worlds
should weep,
I 'd fling the brand in the hissing sea,
The brand that must burn unquenchably.
Your rose is mine ; when the sweet leaves fade,
They must be the chaplet to wreathe my head,
The blossoms to deck my home with the dead.
I repent not—that which my hand has done
Is as fixed as the orb of the burning sun ;
But I swear by Heaven and the mighty sea
That wherever I wander, my heart is with thee.

III

Bitterly, deeply I 've drunk of thy woe ;
When thy stream was troubled, did mine calmly
flow?
And yet I repent not ; I 'd crush thee again
If our vessels sailed adverse on life's stormy main.
But listen ! The earth is our campaign of war,
Her children are rank and her kingdom's spread far.
Who shall say Hah ! to the mingling star?
Is there not havoc and carnage for thee
Unless thou couchest thy lance at me?
The heart in my bosom beats high at the thought
Of the deeds which by blended strength may be
wrought.
Then might thy Mary bloom blissfully still,
This hand should ne'er work her sorrow or ill,
No fear of grief in her bright eyes should quiver ;
I 'd love her and guard her for ever and ever.
What ! shall Zamorna go down to the dead
With blood on his hand that he wept to have shed?
What ! shall they carve on his tomb with the sword
The slayer of Percy, the scourge of the Lord?
Bright flashed the fire in the young Duke's eye
As he spoke in the tones of the trumpet swelling ;
Then he stood still and watched earnestly
How these tones were on Percy's spirit telling ;

Nothing was heard but his quick short breath
And his fiery heart aroused panting.
The dark wood lay as hushed as death,
Nor drum nor murmur its valley haunting;
Then the low voice of Percy woke,
And thus in strange response he spoke.

IV

Companions all day long we 've stood
The wild winds restless blowing,
All day we 've watched the darkened flood
Around our vessel flowing.

Sunshine has never smiled since morn,
And clouds have gathered drear,
And heavier hearts would feel forlorn
And weaker minds would fear.

But look in each young shipmate's eyes
Lit by the evening flame,
And see how little stormy skies
Our joyous blood can tame.

No face one same expression wears,
No lip the same soft smile ;
Yet kindness warms and courage cheers,
Nerves every breast the while.

It is the hour of dreaming now,
With blue and ghostly gleams,
And sweetest in a reddened glow
The hour of dreaming seems.

I may not trace the thoughts of all,
But some I read so well,
As I can hear the ocean's fall
And sudden surging swell.

The swifter soul is gone before,
  It treads a forest wide,
Where bowers are bending to the shore
  And gazing on the tide.

And one is there—I know the voice,
  The thrilling, stirring tone,
That makes his bounding pulse rejoice,
  Yet makes not *his* alone.

Mine own hand longs to clasp her hand,
  Mine eye to meet her eye ;
The white sails win Zorayda's strand,
  And flout against her sky.

September 17, 1840, *E. J. Brontë.*

V

Oh, all the cares these noontide airs
  Might seem to drive away,
So glad and bright each sight appears,
  Each sound so soft and gay ;
And through the shade of yonder glade,
  Where thick the leaves are dancing,
While jewels rare and flow'rets rare
  A hundred plumes are glancing.
For there the palace portals rise
  Beyond its myrtle grove,
Catching the whitest, brightest dyes
  From the deep blue dome above.
But has this little lonely spot,
  No place among its trees,
By all unknown, by all forgot,
  Save sunshine and the breeze?

VI

THERE 's something in this glorious hour
That fills the soul with heavenly power,
And dims our eyes with sudden tears
That centre all the joys of years.
For we feel at once that there lingers still,
Like summer's sunshine o'er a hill,
A glory round life's pinnacle ;
And we know, though we be yet below,
That we may not always linger so,
For still Ambition beckons on,
Is this a height that may be won?
And Hope still whispers in our ear,
'Others have been—thou mayst be there.'

Land of the west! Thy glorious skies,
Their dreamy depths of azure blue,
Their sunlit isles of paradise,
That float in golden glory through.
These depths of azure o'er my sight
Their musing moments seem to expand,
Revealing all their radiance bright
In cloud and gorgeous land.
Land of the west! thine evening sun
Brings thousand voiceless thoughts to mind
Of what I 've said and seen and done
In years by time long left behind ;

And forms and faces lost for ever
Seem arising round me now
As if to bid farewell for ever
Before my spirit go.
Oh! how they gush upon my heart
And overflow my eyes.
I must not keep, I cannot part
With such wild sympathies.
I know it's called a sin and shame
To mourn o'er what I mourn.

Aware her last hour approaching fast,
Upon her dying bed she lies;
Are her wild dreams of western skies,
The shallow wrecks of memories
That glitter through the gloom
Cast o'er them in the cold decay
Which signs the sickening soul away
To meet its early tomb?
What pleasant airs upon her face
With freshening fondness play,
As they would kiss each transient grace
Before it fades away!
And backward rolled each deep red fold,
Begilt with tasselled cords of gold,
The open arch displays;
O'er bower and trees that orb divine
His own unclouded lights decline
Before her glistening gaze.

VII

Sleep, mourner, sleep!—I cannot sleep,
My weary mind still wanders on;
Then silent weep—I cannot weep,
For eyes and tears are turned to stone.

VIII

O MIGHT my footsteps find a rest !
O might my eyes with tears run o'er !
O could the wound but leave my breast
To lapse in days that are no more !
And if I could in silence mourn
Apart from lying sympathy,
And man's remarks or sighs or scorn,
I should be where I wish to be.
For nothing nearer paradise
Ought for a moment to be mine :
I 've far outlived such real joys—
I could not bear so bright a shine ;
For I 've been consecrate to grief—
I should not be if that were gone—
And all my prospect of relief
On earth would be to grieve alone !
To live in sunshine now would be
To live in every sweetest thought ;
What I have been and seen below
Must first be utterly forgot.
And I can not forget the years
Gone by as if they 'd never been ;
Yet if I will remember—tears
Must always dim the dreary scene.
So there 's no choice. However bright
May beam the blaze of July's sun,
' Twill only yield another sight
Of scenes and times for ever gone.

However young and lovely round
Fair forms may meet my cheerless eye,
They 'll only hover o'er the ground
Where fairer forms in darkness lie ;
And voices tuned to music's thrill,
And laughter light as marriage strain,
Will only wake a ghostly chill,
As if the buried spoke again.
All—all is over, friend or lover
Cannot awaken gladness here ;
Though sweep the strings their music over,
No sound will rouse the stirless air.
I am dying away in dull decay,
I feel and know the sands are down,
And evening's latest, lingering ray
And last from my wild heaven is flown.
Not now I speak of things whose forms
Are hid by intervening years,
Not now I fear departed storms
For bygone griefs and dried-up tears.
I cannot weep as once I wept
Over my western beauty's grave,
Nor wake the word that long has slept
By Gambier's towers and trees and wave.
I am speaking of a later stroke,
A death the dream of yesterday ;
I am thinking of my latest shock,
A noble friendship torn away.

I feel and say that I am cast
From hope, and peace, and power, and pride—
A withered leaf on Autumn blast;
A shattered wreck on ocean's tide,
Without a voice to speak to you
Save that deep gong which tolled my doom
And made my dread iniquity
Look darker than my deepest gloom;
Without companion save the light,
For ever present to my eye,
Of that tempestuous winter's night
That saw my angel Mary die.

IX

How Edenlike seem palace walls
When youth and beauty join
To waken up their lighted Halls
With looks and smiles divine!

How free from care the perfumed air
About them seems to play!
How glad and bright appears each sight,
Each sound how soft and gay!

'Tis like the heaven which parting days
In summer's pride imbue
With beams of such impartial blaze,
And yet so tender too.

Oh, memory brings a scene to mind
Beneath whose noble dome
Rank, beauty, wealth, and power combine
To light their lordly home.

Yet parting day, however bright,
It still is parting day—
The herald of approaching night,
The trappings of decay.

X

Now—but one moment—let me stay
One moment, ere I go
To join the ranks whose bugles play
On Eversham's woody brow.

One calm hour on the brink of life
Before I dash amid the strife
That sounds upon my ear;
That sullen sound whose sullen roll
Bursts over many a parting soul—
That deep-mouthed voice of war!

Here am I standing lonely 'neath
The shade of quiet trees,
That scarce can catch a single breath
Of this sweet evening breeze.
And nothing in the twilight sky
Except its veil of clouds on high,
All sleeping calm and grey;
And nothing on the summer gale
But the sweet trumpet's solemn wail
Slow sounding far away.

That and the strange, uncertain sound
Scarce heard, yet heard by all;
A trembling through the summer ground,
A murmuring round the wall.

XI

RETIREMENT

O LET me be alone awhile!
No human form is nigh;
And I may sing and muse aloud,
No mortal ear is by.

Away! ye dreams of earthly bliss,
Ye earthly cares begone!
Depart! ye restless, wandering thoughts,
And let me be alone!

One hour, my spirit, stretch thy wings
And quit this joyless sod;
Bask in the sunshine of the sky,
And be alone with God!

Sunday, December 13, 1840.

XII

DESPONDENCY

I HAVE gone backward in the work,
The labour has not sped,
Drowsy and dark my spirit lies,
Heavy and dull as lead.

How can I rouse my sinking soul
From such a lethargy?
How can I break these iron chains,
And set my spirit free?

There have been times when I have mourned,
In anguish o'er the past;
And raised my suppliant hands on high,
While tears fell thick and fast.

And prayed to have my sins forgiven,
With such a fervent zeal,
An earnest grief—a strong desire
That now I cannot feel!

And vowed to trample on my sins,
And called on Heaven to aid
My spirit in her firm resolves
And hear the vows I made.

And I have felt so full of love,
  So strong in spirit then,
As if my heart would never cool,
  Or wander back again.

And yet, alas! how many times
  My feet have gone astray;
How oft have I forgot my God,
  How greatly fallen away!

My sins increase, my love grows cold,
  And Hope within me dies,
And Faith itself is wavering now;
  O how shall I arise!

I cannot weep, but I can pray,
  Then let me not despair;
Lord Jesus, save me lest I die,
  And hear a wretch's prayer.

December 20, 1841.

XIII

IN MEMORY OF A HAPPY DAY IN FEBRUARY

Blessed be Thou for all the joy
My soul has felt to-day!
O let its memory stay with me
And never pass away!

I was alone, for those I loved
Were far away from me;
The sun shone on the withered grass,
The wind blew fresh and free.

Was it the smile of early spring
That made my bosom glow?
'Twas sweet, but neither sun nor wind
Could raise my spirit so.

Was it some feeling of delight,
All vague and undefined?
No, 'twas a rapture deep and strong,
Expanding in my mind!

Was it a sanguine view of life
And all its transient bliss—
A hope of bright prosperity?
O no, it was not this!

It was a glimpse of truths divine
  Unto my spirit given,
Illumined by a ray of light
  That shone direct from Heaven!

I knew there was a God on high
  By whom all things were made;
I saw His wisdom and His power
  In all His works displayed.

But most throughout the moral world
  I saw His glory shine;
I saw His wisdom infinite,
  His mercy all divine.

Deep secrets of His Providence
  In darkness long concealed,
Were brought to my delighted eyes
  And graciously revealed.

And while I wondered and adored
  His wisdom so divine,
I did not tremble at His power—
  I felt that God was mine.

I knew that my Redeemer lived,
  I did not fear to die;
I felt that I should rise again
  To immortality.

I longed to view that bliss divine
Which eye hath never seen,
To see the glories of His face
Without the veil between.

Begun in February—finished November 10, 1842.

XIV

A PRAYER

My God! O let me call Thee mine!
Weak, wretched sinner though I be,
My trembling soul would fain be Thine,
My feeble faith still clings to Thee.

Not only for the past I grieve,
The future fills me with dismay;
Unless Thou hasten to relieve,
I know my heart will fall away.

I cannot say my faith is strong,
I have not hope my love is great;
But strength and love to Thee belong:
O do not leave me desolate!

I know I owe my all to Thee;
O take the heart I cannot give;
Do Thou my Strength, my Saviour be,
And make me to Thy glory live!

October 13, 1844.

XV

CONFIDENCE

Oppressed with sin and woe,
A burdened heart I bear,
Opposed by many a mighty foe;
But I will not despair.

With this polluted heart,
I dare to come to Thee,
Holy and mighty as Thou art;
For Thou wilt pardon me.

I feel that I am weak,
And prone to every sin;
But Thou who giv'st to those who seek,
Wilt give me strength within.

Far as this earth may be
From yonder starry skies,
Remoter still am I from Thee;
Yet Thou wilt not despise.

I need not fear my foes,
I need not yield to care,
I need not sink beneath my woes;
For Thou wilt answer prayer.

In my Redeemer's name
I give myself to Thee ;
And all unworthy as I am,
My God will cherish me.

O make me wholly Thine !
Thy love to me impart,
And let Thy holy Spirit shine
For ever on my heart !

June 1, 1845.

XVI

THERE let thy bleeding branch atone
For every torturing tear.
Shall my young sins, my sins alone,
Be everlasting here?

Who bade thee keep that carvèd name
A pledge for memory?
As if oblivion ever came
To breathe its bliss on me;

As if through all the 'wildering maze
Of mad hours left behind
I once forgot the early days
That thou wouldst call to mind.

XVII

I AM the only being whose doom
No tongue would ask, no eye would mourn ;
I've never caused a thought of gloom,
A smile of joy, since I was born.

In secret pleasure, secret tears,
This changeful life has slipped away,
As friendless after eighteen years,
As lone as on my natal day.

There have been times I cannot hide,
There have been times when this was drear,
When my sad soul forgot its pride
And longed for one to love me here.

But those were in the early glow
Of feelings that subdued by care,
And they have died so long ago,
I hardly now believe they were.

First melted off the hope of youth,
Then fancy's rainbow fast withdrew ;
And then experience told me truth
In mortal bosoms never grew.

'Twas grief enough to think mankind
All hollow, servile, insincere ;
But worse to trust to my own mind
And find the same Corruption there.

May 17, 1839.

XVIII

'Tis moonlight, summer moonlight,
All soft, and still, and fair;
The silent time of midnight
Shines sweetly everywhere.

But most where trees are sending
Their breezy boughs on high,
Or stooping low are lending
A shelter from the sky.

And there in those wild bowers
A lovely form is laid,
Green grass and dew-steeped flowers
Wave gently round her head.

May 13, 1840.

XIX

A SUDDEN chasm of ghastly light
Yawned in the city's reeling wall,
And a long thundering through the night
Proclaimed our triumph—Tyrdarum's fall.

The shrieking wind sank mute and mild,
The smothering snow-clouds rolled away ;
And cold—how cold ! wan moonlight smiled
Where those black ruins smouldering lay.

'Twas over—all the battle's madness,
The bursting fires, the cannon's roar,
The yells, the groans, the frenzied gladness,
The death the danger warmed no more.

In plundered churches piled with dead
The heavy charger neighed for food,
The wounded soldier laid his head
'Neath roofless chambers splashed with blood.

I could not sleep through that wild siege,
My heart had fiercely burned and bounded ;
The outward tumult seemed to assuage
The inward tempest it surrounded.

. . . . .

But dreams like this I cannot bear,
And silence whets the fang of pain ;
I felt the full flood of despair
Returning to my breast again.

My couch lay in a ruined Hall,
Whose windows looked on the minster-yard,
Where chill, chill whiteness covered all,
Both stone and urn and withered sward.

The shattered glass let in the air
And with it came a wandering moan,
A sound unutterably drear,
That made me shrink to be alone.

One black yew-tree grew just below—
I thought its boughs so sad might wail;
Their ghostly fingers flecked with snow,
Rattled against an old vault's rail.

I listened—no; 'twas life that still
Lingered in some deserted heart:
O God! what caused the shuddering shrill,
That anguished, agonising start?

An undefined, an awful dream,
A dream of what had been before;
A memory whose blighting beam
Was flitting o'er me evermore.

A frightful feeling frenzy born—
I hurried down the dark oak stair;
I reached the door whose hinges torn
Flung streaks of moonshine here and there.

I pondered not, I drew the bar,
  An icy glory caught mine eye,
From that wide heaven where every star
  Stared like a dying memory.

And there the great Cathedral rose,
  Discrowned but most majestic so,
It looked down in serene repose
  On its own realm of buried woe.

'Tis evening now, the sun decends
  In golden glory down the sky ;
The city's murmur softly blends
  With zephyrs breathing gently by.

And yet it seems a dreary moor,
  A dark, October moor to me ;
And black the piles of rain-clouds lour
  Athwart heaven's stormy canopy.

October 14, 1837.

XX

AT CASTLE WOOD

THE day is done, the winter sun
  Is setting in its sullen sky,
And drear the course that has been run,
  And dim the hearts that slowly die.

No star will light my coming night,
  No morn of hope for me will shine;
I mourn not Heaven would blast my sight
  And I never longed for joys divine.

Through life's hard task I did not ask
  Celestial aid, celestial cheer;
I saw my fate without its mask,
  And met it too without a tear.

The grief that prest my aching breast
  Was heavier far than earth can be;
And who would dread eternal rest
  When labour's hour was agony?

Dark falls the fear of this despair
  On spirits born of happiness;
But I was bred the mate of care,
  The foster-child of sore distress.

No sighs for me, no sympathy,
  No wish to keep my soul below ;
The heart is dead in infancy,
  Unwept for let the body go.

February 2, 1844.

XXI

On its bending stalk a bonny flower
In a yeoman's home-close grew ;
It had gathered beauty from sunshine and shower,
From moonlight and silent dew,
Till the tufted leaves of the garden bower
Like a star it sparkled through.

It was a little budding rose,
Round like a fairy globe,
And shyly did its leaves unclose
Hid in their mossy robe,
But sweet was the slight and spicy smell
It breathed from its heart invisible.

Keenly his flower the yeoman guarded,
He watched it grow both day and night ;
From the frost, from the wind, from the storm he warded
That flush of roseate light,
And ever it glistened bonnilie
Under the shade of the old roof-tree.

The morning sunshine had called him forth,
His garden was full of dew,
And green light slept on the happy earth,
And the sky was calm and blue.
The yeoman looked for his lovely flower ;
There were leaves, but no buds, in the sheltering bower.

The rose was borne to another land,
And grew in another bed ;
It was cultured by another hand,
And it sprung and flourishèd ;
And fair it budded day by day
Beneath a new sun's cheering ray.

But long lies the dew on its crimson leaves,
It almost looks like tears ;
The flower for the yeoman's home-close grieves
Amid a King's parterres.
Little moss-rose, cease to weep,
Let regret and sorrow sleep.

The rose is blasted, withered, blighted,
Its root has felt a worm,
And like a heart beloved and slighted,
Failed, faded, shrunk its form.
Bud of beauty, bonnie flower,
I stole thee from thy natal bower.

I was the worm that withered thee,
Thy tears of dew all fell for me ;
Leaf and stalk and rose are gone,
Exile earth they died upon.
Yes, that last breath of balmy scent
With alien breezes sadly blent.

XXII

And like myself lone, wholly lone,
It sees the day's long sunshine glow ;
And like myself it makes its moan
In unexhausted woe.

Give we the hills our equal prayer,
Earth's breezy hills and heaven's blue sea ;
I ask for nothing further here
But my own heart and liberty.

Ah ! could my hand unlock its chain,
How gladly would I with it soar ;
And ne'er regret and ne'er complain
To see its shining eyes no more.

But let me think, that if to-day
It pines in cold captivity,
To-morrow both shall soar away,
Eternally, entirely free.

Methinks this heart should rest awhile,
So stilly round the evening falls ;
The veiled sun shone no parting smile,
Nor mirth, nor music wakes my halls.

I have sat lonely all the day,
Watching the drizzly mist descend,
And first conceal the hills in grey,
And then along the valleys wend.

And I have sat and watched the trees,
  And the sad flowers, how drear they blew ;
Those flowers were formed to feel the breeze
  Wave their light heads in summer's glow.

Yet their lives passed in gloomy woe,
  And hopeless comes its dark decline,
And I lament because I know
  That cold departure pictures mine.

February 27, 1841.

XXIII

TO THE HORSE BLACK EAGLE

WHICH I RODE AT THE BATTLE OF ZAMORNA

SWART steed of night, thou hast charged thy last
O'er the red war-trampled plain ;
Now fall'n asleep is the battle blast,
It is stilled above the slain.

Now hushed is the clang of armour bright ;
Thou wilt never bear me more
To the deadliest press of the gathering fight
Through seas of noble gore.

And the cold eyes of midnight skies
Shall not pour their light on thee,
When the wearied host of the conqueror lies
On a field of victory.

Rest now in thy glory, noble steed ;
Rest ! all thy wars are done ;
True is the love and high the meed
Thou from thy lord hast won.

In daisied lawns sleep peacefully,
Dwell by the quiet wave,
Till death shall sound his signal cry,
And call thee to thy grave.

XXIV

All her tresses backward strayed
  Look golden in the gleam,
But her wan lips and sunken cheek
And full eyes eloquently speak
  Of sorrows gathering near,
Till those dark orbs o'erflowing fast
Are shadowed by her hand at last
  To hide the streaming tear.

Oh! say not that her vivid dreams
  Are but the shattered glass
Which but because more broken gleams
  Move brightly in the grass.
Her spirit is the unfathomed lake
Whose face the sudden tempests break
  To one tormented roar;
But as the wild winds sink in peace
All those disturbèd waves decrease
Till each far-down reflection is
  As lifelike as before.

She thought when that confession crossed
  Upon her dying mind,
'Twas sense and soul and memory lost,
  Though feeling burned behind.
But that bright heaven has touched a chord
And that wide west has waked a word

Can still the spirit's storm ;
Till all the griefs that brought her here,
Each gushing with a bitterer tear,
Round her returning sight appear
In more tremendous form.

In glimpses of a spirit shore
The strength of eyesight to restore
Which coming death denied ;
That while the world was lost to her
Her soul might rove a wanderer
Through visional wonders wide.

And strange it is how oft in death,
When reason leaves the brain,
What sudden power the fancy hath
To seize the falling rein.
It cannot hold a firm control,
But it can guide the parting soul,
Half leading and half led,
Through dreams where startling imagery
Hide with their feigned reality
The tossed and fevered bed.

It seems as to the bleeding heart
With dying torments riven
A quickened life in every part
By fancy's force was given.
And all these dim, disjointed dreams
Wherewith the failing memory beams

Are but the bright reflection
Flashed upward from the scattered glass
Of mirror broken on the grass,
Which shapeless figures on each piece
Reveals without connection.

And is her mirror broke at last
Who motionless is laid . . .

. . . . . .

XXV

THE wind was rough which tore
That leaf from its parent tree;
The fate was cruel which bore
The withering corpse to me.

We wander and we have no rest,
It is a dreary way.
What shadow is it
That ever hovers before my eyes?
It has a brow of ghostly whiteness.

November 23, 1839.

XXVI

His land may burst the galling chain,
His people may be free again,
For them a thousand hopes remain,
  But hope is dead for him.
Soft falls the moonlight on the sea
Whose wild waves play at liberty,
And Gondal's wind sings solemnly
  Its hollow midnight hymn.

Around his prison walls it sings,
His heart is stirred through all its strings,
Because that sound remembrance brings
  Of scenes that once have been.
His soul has felt the storm below,
And walked a realm of sunless snow,
Dire region of most mighty woe,
  Made voiceless by despair.

And Harold's land may burst its chain,
His subjects may be free again,
For them a thousand hopes remain,
  But hope is dead for him.
Set is his sun of liberty ;
Fixed is his earthly destiny ;
A few years of captivity,
  And then a captive's tomb.

XXVII

START not! upon the minster wall
Sunshine is shed in holy calm,
And lonely though my footsteps fall,
The saints shall shelter thee from harm.

Shrink not if it be summer noon,
This shadow should night's welcome be;
These stairs are steep, but landed soon
We 'll rest us long and quietly.

What though our path be o'er the dead,
They slumber soundly in the tomb;
And why should mortals fear to tread
The pathway to their future home?

XXVIII

Redbreast, early in the morning,
  Dark and cold and cloudy grey,
Wildly tender is thy music,
  Chasing angry thought away.

My heart is not enraptured now,
  My eyes are full of tears,
And constant sorrow on my brow
  Has done the work of years.

It was not hope that wrecked at once
  The spirit's calm in storm,
But a long life of solitude,
Hopes quenched, and rising thoughts subdued,
  A bleak November's calm.

What woke it then? A little child
  Strayed from its father's cottage door,
And in the hour of moonlight wild
  Laid lonely on the desert moor.

I heard it then, you heard it too,
And seraph sweet it sang to you;
But like the shriek of misery
That wild, wild music wailed to me.

February 1837.

XXIX

THROUGH the hours of yesternight
Hall and gallery blazed with light,
Every lamp its lustre showered
On the adorer and the adored.
None were sad that entered there,
All were loved and all were fair ;
Some were dazzling like the sun ;
Some shining down at summer noon.
Some were sweet as amber even,
Living in the depth of Heaven ;
Some were soft, and kind, and gay,
Morning's face not more divine ;
Some were like Diana's day,
Midnight moonlight's holy shrine.

XXX

DARKNESS was overtraced on every face,
  Around clouded with storm and ominous gloom ;
In hut or hall smiled out no resting-place ;
  There was no resting-place but one—the tomb !

All our hearths were the mansions of distress,
  And no one laughed, and none seemed free from
    care ;
Our children felt their fathers' wretchedness ;
  Our homes, one, all were shadowed with despair :
It was not fear that made the land so sad.

May 1838.

XXXI

HARP of wild and dream-like strain,
When I touch thy strings,
Why dost thou repeat again
Long-forgotten things?

Harp, in other earlier days
I could sing to thee,
And not one of all my lays
Vexed my memory.

But now if I awake a note
That gave me joy before,
Sounds of sorrow from thee float,
Changing evermore.

Yet still steeped in memory's dyes
They come sailing on,
Darkening all my summer skies,
Shutting out my sun.

XXXII

THE old church tower and garden wall
Are black with autumn rain,
And dreary winds foreboding call
The darkness down again.

I watched how evening took the place
Of glad and glorious day;
I watched a deeper gloom efface
The evening's lingering ray;
And as I gazed on the cheerless sky,
Sad thoughts rose in my mind.

October 1837.

XXXIII

THERE swept adown that dreary glen
A wider sound than mountain wind—
The thrilling shouts of fighting men,
With something sadder far behind.

The thrilling shouts they died away
Before the night came greyly down,
But closed not with the closing day
The choking sob, the tortured moan.

Down in a hollow sunk in shade,
Where dark forms waved in secret gloom,
A ruined, bleeding form was laid,
Waiting the death that was to come.

November 1838.

XXXIV

In dungeons dark I cannot sing,
  In sorrow's thrall 'tis hard to smile;
What bird can soar with broken wing?
  What heart can bleed and joy the while?

XXXV

WHEN days of beauty deck the vale,
Or stormy nights descend,
How well my spirit knows the path
On which it ought to wend.

It seeks the consecrated spot
Beloved in childhood's years;
The space between is all forgot,
Its sufferings and its tears.

XXXVI

STILL beside that dreary water
Stood beneath the cold moon's ray,
Thinking on the deed of slaughter
On his heart that darkly lay.

Soft the voice that broke his dreaming,
Stealing through the silent air,
Yet before the raven's screaming,
He had heard regardless there.

Once his name was sweetly uttered,
Then the echo died away ;
But each pulse in horror fluttered,
As the life would pass away.

XXXVII

THE evening sun was sinking down
  On low green hills and clustered trees ;
It was a scene as fair and lone
  As ever felt the soothing breeze

That cools the grass when day is gone,
  And gives the waves a brighter blue,
And marks the soft white clouds sail on
  Like spirits of ethereal dew ;

Which all the morn had hovered o'er
  The azure flowers where they were nursed,
And now return to Heaven once more,
  Where their bright glories shone at first.

September 23, 1836.

XXXVIII

FALL, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me,
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.

XXXIX

Loud without the wind was roaring
  Through the wan autumnal sky ;
Drenching wet the cold rain pouring,
  Spoke of stormy winter nigh.

All too like that dreary eve
Sighed without repining grief,
Sighed at first, but sighed not long ;
  Sweet, how softly sweet it came—
Wild words of an ancient song,
  Undefined, without a name.

November 1836.

XL

All day I 've toiled, but not with pain,
In learning's golden wine ;
And now at eventide again
The moonbeams softly shine.

There is no snow upon the ground,
No frost on wind or wave ;
The south wind blew with gentlest sound
And broke their icy grave.

'Tis sweet to wander here at night,
To watch the winter die,
With heart as summer sunshine light
And warm as summer sky.

O may I never lose the peace
That lulls me gently now,
Though time should change my youthful face,
And years should shade my brow !

True to myself, and true to all,
May I be healthful still,
And turn away from passion's call,
And curb my own wild will.

XLI

THERE was a time when my cheek burned
To give such scornful words the lie,
Ungoverned nature madly spurned
The law that bade it not defy.
Oh, in the days of ardent youth
I would have given my life for truth.

For truth, for right, for liberty,
I would have gladly, freely died;
And now I calmly bear and see
The vain man smile, the fool deride,
Though not because my heart is tame,
Though not for fear, though not for shame.

My soul still chokes at every tone
Of selfish and self-clouded error;
My breast still braves the world alone,
Steeled as it ever was to terror.
Only I know, howe'er I frown,
The same world will go rolling on.

October 1839.

XLII

Mild the mist upon the hill,
  Telling not of storms to-morrow;
No, the day has wept its fill,
  Spent its store of silent sorrow.

Oh, I 'm gone back to the days of youth,
  I am a child once more,
And 'neath my father's sheltering roof
  And near the old hall door,

I watch this cloudy evening fall,
  After a day of rain;
Blue mists, sweet mists of summer pall
  The horizon's mountain chain.

The damp stands in the long, green grass
  As thick as morning's tears;
And dreamy scents of fragrance pass
  That breathe of other years.

July 27, 1839.

XLIII

THE starry night shall tidings bring,
Go out upon the breezy moor;
Watch for a bird with sable wing,
And beak and talons dropping gore.

Look not around, look not beneath,
But mutely trace its airy way,
Mark where it lights upon the heath;
Then, wanderer, kneel thee down, and pray.

What fortune may await thee there,
I will not, and I dare not tell;
But Heaven is moved by fervent prayer,
And God is mercy—fare thee well!

It is not pride, it is not shame,
That makes her leave the gorgeous hall;
And though neglect her heart might tame,
She mourns not for her sudden fall.

'Tis true she stands among the crowd,
An unmarked and an unloved child,
While each young comrade, blithe and proud,
Glides through the maze of pleasure wild.

And all do homage to their will,
And all seem glad their voice to hear;
She heeds not that, but hardly still
Her eye can hold the quivering tear.

What made her weep, what made her glide
Out to the park this dreary day,
And cast her jewelled chains aside,
And seek a rough and lonely way;

And down beneath a cedar's shade,
On the wet grass regardless lie,
With nothing but its gloomy head
Between her and the showering sky?

I saw her stand in the gallery long,
Watching those little children there,
As they were playing the pillars among
And bounding down the marble stair.

August 13, 1839.

XLIV

THE organ swells, the trumpets sound,
The lamps in triumph glow,
And none of all those thousand round
Regard who sleeps below.

Those haughty eyes that tears should fill
Glance clearly, cloudlessly ;
Those bounding breasts that grief should thrill
From thought of grief are free.

His subjects and his soldiers there
They blessed his rising bloom,
But none a single sigh can spare
To breathe above his tomb.

Comrades in arms, I 've looked to mark
One shade of feeling swell,
As your feet stood above the dark
Recesses of his cell.

September 30, 1837.

XLV

What winter floods, what streams of spring
Have drenched the grass by night and day,
And yet beneath that speeding ring
Unmoved and undiscovered lay.

Mute remembrancer of crime,
Long lost, concealed, forgot for years,
It comes at last to cancel time,
And waken unavailing tears.

March 27, 1832.

XLVI

None of my kindred now can tell
The features once beloved so well.
Those dark brown locks that used to deck
A snowy brow in ringlets small,
Now wildly shade my sunburnt neck,
And streaming down my shoulders fall.

The pure, bright red of noble birth
Has deepened to a gipsy glow,
And care is quenched the smile of mirth,
And tuned my heart to welcome woe.

Yet you must know in infancy
Full many an eye watched over me,
Sweet voices to my slumber sung,
My downy couch with silk was hung.

And music soothed me when I cried,
And when I laughed they all replied ;
And 'rosy Blanche,' how oft was heard
In hall and bower that well-known word.

Through gathering summers still caress'd,
In kingly courts a favourite guest,
A Monarch's hand would pour for me
The richest gifts of royalty.

But clouds will come: too soon they came;
For not through age, and not through crime,
Is Blanche a now forgotten name;
True heart and brow unmarked by time,
These treasured blessings still are mine.

June 1838.

XLVII

LADYBIRD! ladybird! fly away home,
Night is approaching, and sunset is come;
The Herons are flown to their trees by the Hall;
Felt, but unseen, the damp dewdrops fall.
This is the close of a still summer day;
Ladybird! ladybird! haste! fly away!

The grand old Hall is wrapped in shade,
The woodland park around it spread,
In gathering gloom in every glade,
This is the moment, this the hour,
To feel romance in all her power.
Is there not something in a name?
In noble blood, and ancient fame,
Something in that ancestral pride
Which brings the memory of the dead
Sailing adown times hoary tide,
With sacred halos round it shed?
Halos! O far too bright to shine
Round ought whose home is still below,
The starlight thoughts, the dreams divine,
From man's creative soul that flow,
And stream upon the Idols bright
He forms through all his earthly way,
As if grown weary of the light
That smiles upon his own dull clay,

That clay he feels will not for ever
'Cumber the spirit that would soar
To that deep and swelling river
Which bears the life tree on its shore;
And he the hour would still foresee
That sets his inward angel free.

This Hall and park might wake such dreams,
They speak of pride, of ancestry;
Yes! every fading ray which gleams
On antique roof and hoary tree,
Shows in gnarled bough and mossy slate
The grand remains of ancient state.

And thinks he of Patrician pride,
He who sits lonely there,
Where oaks and elms spread dark and wide
Their huge arms in the air?

He wanders in the world of thought,
He 's left *this* world behind;
On that high brow are clearly wrought
A thousand dreams of mind.

And are they dreams of bliss or bale,
Of happiness or woe?
Methinks that face is all too pale
For pleasure's rosy glow.

Methinks the mellowing haze of years
Is over that tall form spread,
And time has poured her smiles and tears
Full freely round that head.

He must have once been beautiful,
The relics still remain ;
Though wasted sore with sorrow,
And darkened much with pain.

At morn he sought this lone retreat,
When the sun first crowned the hill,
And now the twilight calm and sweet
Beholds him lingering still.

Yet not to reveries of woe
Clings Percy's wounded spirit so :
Scarce bound by its worn chains of clay,
The soul has almost soared away.
Lightened and soothed insensibly
By the lone home of wind and tree,
Where now his mental broodings dwell,
Vainly would man divine or tell.
His upward look, his earnest eyes,
Seem gazing e'en beyond the skies.
Who calls him back to earth again,
Will bring a wild revulse of pain.

And so thought he who glided now,
With step as light as falling snow,
Forth from the bowery arch of trees,
That whispered in the gloaming breeze.
That step he might have used before
When stealing on to lady's bower,
Forth at the same still twilight hour,
For the moon now beaming mild above
Showed him a son of war and love.

His eye was full of that sinful fire
Which oft unhallowed passions light.
It spoke of quickly kindled ire,
Of love too warm, and wild, and bright.
Bright, but yet sullied, love which could never
  Bring good in rising, leave peace in decline,
Woe to the gifted, crime to the giver,
  Wherever reposed all the light of its shine.
Beauty had lavished her treasures upon him,
  Youth's early sunshine was poured on his brow:
Alas! that the magic of sin should have won him;
  But he is her slave, and her chained victim now.

Now from his curled and shining hair,
Circling the brow of marble fair,
His dark, keen eyes on Percy gaze
With stern, and yet repenting rays.
Sometimes they shimmer through the haze
  Of sadly gushing tears,
And then a sudden flash of flame,
Speaking wild feelings none could tame,
  The dim suffusion clears.

Young savage! how he bends above
The object of his wrath and love,
How tenderly his fingers press
The hand that shrinks from their caress,

And from his lips in Percy's ear
Flow tones his blood congeals to hear.
Those tones were softer than the moan
Of echo when the sound is flown,
And sweeter than a flute's reply
To skylark's song, or wild wind's sigh.
Yet Percy heard them as they fell,
Like the dull toll of a passing bell.
Sternly they summoned him back again
To a dark world of woe and pain.
The blood from his visage fell away
And left it as pallid as coffined clay.
Like clouds the charmèd visions broke,
From his daylong dream at once he woke ;
He woke to feel and see at his side
  The very man who dared to roll
This dark unsounded briny tide
  Over the Eden of his soul ;
Who dared to pluck his last fair flower,
  To quench his last star's cheering beam,
The last sweet drop of bliss to sour
  That mingled with his being's stream.
Up rose he, and stretched forth his hand,
In mingled menace and command ;
With voice subdued and steady look,
Thus to the man of sin he spoke :
'What brought you hear? I called you
    not ;
You've tracked me to a lonely spot.
Are you a hawk to follow the prey,
When mangled it flutters feebly away?

A sleuthhound to track the deer by his blood,
When wounded he wins to the darkest wood,
There if he can to die alone?'

Unsought by the archer whose shaft has flown
So right and true to its living mark
That it quenches e'en now the vital spark,
Zamorna is this nobly done,
To triumph o'er your Consort's sire,
Gladly to see his gory sun
Quench in the sea of tears its fire?
But haply you have news to tell,
Tidings that yet may cheer me well;
You 've crushed at last my rose's bloom,
And scattered its leaves on her mother's tomb.

XLVIII

I 'VE been wandering in the greenwoods,
And 'mid flowery, smiling plains;
I 've been listening to the dark floods,
To the thrush's thrilling strains.

I have gathered the pale primrose,
And the purple violet sweet;
I 've been where the asphodel grows,
And where lives the red deer fleet.

I 've been to the distant mountain,
To the silver singing rill,
By the crystal murm'ring fountain,
And the shady, verdant hill.

I 've been where the poplars springing
From the fair enamelled ground,
While the nightingale is singing
With a solemn, plaintive sound.

December 14, 1839.

XLIX

MAY flowers are opening,
And leaves unfolding free ;
There are bees in every blossom,
And birds on every tree.

The sun is gladly shining,
The stream sings merrily ;
And lonely I am pining,
And all is dark to me.

O cold, cold is my heart!
It will not, cannot rise ;
It feels no sympathy
With those refulgent skies.

Dead, dead is my joy,
I long to be at rest ;
I wish the damp earth covered
This desolated breast.

If I were quite alone,
It might not be so drear,
When all hope was gone ;
At least I could not fear.

But the glad eyes around me
Must weep as mine have done,
And I must see the final gloom
Eclipse their morning sun.

If heaven would rain on me
  That future storm of care,
So their fond hearts were free,
  I 'd be content to bear.

Alas! as lightning withers
  The young and aged tree,
Both they and I shall fall beneath
  The fate we cannot flee.

January 25, 1839, *E. J. Brontë.*

L

That dreary lake, that moonlight sky,
  That wan moon struggling through the cloud,
That sullen murmur whispering by
  As if it dared not speak aloud,
Fall on my heart so sadly now,
  Whither my joys so lonely flow.
Touch them not, they bloom and smile,
But their roots are withering all the while.

LI

HEAVEN'S glory shone where he was laid
In life's decline !
I turned me from that young saint's bed
To gaze on thine.

It was a summer day that saw
His spirit's flight ;
Thine parted in a time of awe,
A winter's night.

Upon her soothing breast
She lulled her little child,
A winter sunset in the west
A heavy glory smiled.
I gazed within thine earnest eyes
And read the sorrow brooding there ;
I heard thy young breast torn with sighs,
And envied such despair.

Go to the grave in youth's bare woe !
That dream was written long ago.

December 19, 1839.

LII

THAT WORD 'NEVER'

Not many years but long enough to see
No ten can deal such deadly misery
  As the dear friend untimely called away ;
And still the more beloved, the greater still
Must be the aching void, the withering chill
  Of each dark night and dim, beclouded day.

December 23 [1839].

LIII

I KNOW not how it falls on me,
This summer evening hushed and lone;
Yet the faint wind comes soothingly
With something of an olden tone.

Forgive me if I 've shunned so long
Your gentle greeting, earth and air!
But sorrow withers e'en the strong,
And who can fight against despair?

The busy day has glided by,
And hearts greet kindred hearts once more;
And swift the evening hour should fly,
But what turns every gleaming eye
So often to the unopened door?

June 3, 1831.

LIV

MONTH after month, year after year,
My harp has poured a dreary strain ;
At length a livelier note shall cheer,
And pleasure tune its chords again.

What though the stars and fair moonlight
Are quenched in morning dull and grey?
They are but tokens of the night,
And *this*, my soul, is day.

June 18, 1839.

LV

She dried her tears and they did smile
To see her cheek's returning glow;
Nor did discern how all the while
That full heart throbbed to overflow.

With that sweet look and lively tone,
And bright eye shining all the day,
They could not guess at midnight lone
How she would weep the time away.

LVI

I 'M happiest now when most away
I can tear my soul from its mould of clay,
On a windy night when the moon is bright,
And my eye can wander through worlds of light.

When I am not, and none beside,
  Nor earth, nor sea, nor cloudless sky,
But only spirit wandering wide
  Through infinite immensity.

LVII

WEANED from life and flown away
In the morning of thy day,
Bound in everlasting gloom,
Buried in a hapless tomb.

Yet upon thy bended knee
Thank the power that banished thee ;
Chain and bar and dungeon wall
Saved thee from a deadlier thrall.

Thank the power that made thee part
Ere that parting broke thy heart.
Wildly rushed the mountain spring
From its source of fern and ling ;
How invincible its roar,
Had its waters worn the shore.

February 1838.

LVIII

All hushed and still within the house ;
Without, all wind and driving rain ;
But something whispers to my mind,
Wrought up in rain and wailing wind :
Never again ? Why not again ? Never again ;
Memory has power as well as wind.

But the hearts that once adored me
Have long forgot their vow ;
And the friends that mustered round me,
Have all forsaken now.

'Twas in a dream revealed to me,
But not a dream of sleep ;
A dream of watchful agony,
Of guilt that would not weep.

LIX

THE sunshine of a summer sun
On the proud domes of Elrington
Glows with a beam divinely bright
In one unquenched, unvarying light,
And high its archèd windows rise,
As if to invite the smiling skies ;
And proud its mighty columns show
Between them ranked in haughty row ;
And sweet and soft the solemn shade
By the o'erarching portals made.
The starry halls of Elrington
May glisten in that glorious sun,
For fêtes and feasts are given to-day
To noble Lords and Ladies gay ;
And that vast city of the sea
Which round us lies so endlessly
Has hither sent its proudest train
To worship mirth and fly from pain.
The sunshine of a summer's sun
Glows o'er the graves of Elrington,
Where city walls spread wide around
The flower and foliage laden ground.
All round the hot and glaring sky
Bespeaks a mighty city nigh ;
And through each opening in the shade
Palace and temple crown the glade.
So here an oasis stands
'Mid the wide wastes of Egypt's sands.

This glorious vision of a grove,
With flowers beneath and fruits above,
Lies in that city's human sea
Whose streets stretch round so ceaselessly.
Oh! who could pass unnoticed by
This scene of nature's royalty?
Instead of birds to warble there,
Ethereal music fills the air,
Breathed from these halls thrown open wide
To admit the ever-changing tide
Of Earth and Afric's hope and pride.

LX

My ancient ship upon my ancient sea
Begins another voyage—nay, they 're gone ;
And whither wending ? who is gone with thee ?
Since parted from thee I am left alone,
Unknowing what my river's fate may be,
Into its native world of tempests thrown.
Lost like the spectres once my eye before,
Which wilder visions muster'd to my mind ;
Lost and unnoticed far away the roar
Of southern waters breaking to the wind,
With thunder volleys rolling on before
As the wild gale sweeps wilder on behind,
And every vision of old Afric's shore
As much forgot and vanished out of mind
As the wild track thou makest so long ago
From those eternal waves that surge below.

Gone !—'tis a word which through life's troubled waste
Seems always coming, and the only one
Which can be called the *present*. Hope is past,
And hate and strife, and love and peace are gone
Before we think them, for their rapid haste
Scarce gives us time for one short smile or groan
Ere that thought dies and new ones come between
It, and our senses like to fleeting suns.

And yet there is—or seems at least to be—
A general scheme of thought that colours all ;
So though each one be different, all agree
In the same melancholy shade-like pall ;
Even as the shadows look the same to me,
Though cast, I know, from many a varying wall
In this vast city—hut and temple sharing
In the same light, and the same darkness wearing.

Not that I deem all life a course of shade,
Nor all the world a waste of streets like these :
From youth to age a mighty change is made
As from this city to the southern seas.
For years through youthful hope our course is laid,
For years in sloth a sea without a breeze,
For years within some silent, shapeless cave,
Changing, and still the same, yet swiftly passing.

'Tis here 'tis there, 'tis nowhere—oh ! my soul,
Is there no rest from such a fruitless chasing
Of the wild dreams that ever round me roll ?
Each as it comes the parting thought defacing,
Yet all still hurrying to the self-same goal.
Gone ! Can I catch them ? — but their path alone
Stretching afar toward *one* for ever gone !
What have I now? The star that brightly shone

Now seems as nothing in the single cloud
That shadows it and long has seemed to hover
O'er all the crossing thoughts that overflowed.
In this wrecked spirit, oh! my ocean,
Well may'st thou plough the deep so free and proud:
Thou bear'st the dim tie of ceaseless dreams,
The fount, the confluence of a thousand streams.

LXI

I DO not see myself again
A wanderer o'er the Atlantic main ;
I do not backward turn my eye
T'wards sleepless sea and stormy sky.
Oh no ; these brighter visions vast
To woodlands of the west have past ;
And there shall Hesperus arise
To watch my treasure where it lies.
The present lands, the present clime,
Forbid the dreams of olden time ;
The present thoughts, the present hour,
Are rife with deeds of sterner power :
And who shall be my leading star
Amid the howling storm of war?

Hark ! listen to the distant gun
From the battlefield of Edwordston ;
It breaks upon the awful roar
  Which stuns my ears around,
And makes the shout of victory
  Strike with a hollow sound.
My struggles all are crowned with power,
And Fortune gives a glorious hour.
Men who hate me kneel before me,
Men who kneel are forced t' adore me ;
My name is on a million tongues,
The million babble on my wrongs ;

And twenty years of tyrant pride
Which strove this modern God to hide,
At last have vanished in the rays
Of his unquenched, unclouded blaze,
Oh! is not Jesus come again
Over his thousand saints to reign?
To free the world from tyrant's chain,
While sin and hatred vainly spit
Their venomed fury, as they sit.
Their reign is past, their power is gone,
For fallen is mighty Babylon.

Through the hoarse howling of the storm
I saw, but did I truly see
One glimpse of that unearthly form
Whose very form is Victory?
'Twas but a glance, and all seems past,
For cares like clouds again return,
And I 'll forget him till the blast
For ever from my soul has flown—
That vision of a mighty host
Crushed helpless into earth and Dust!

Forget him! In the cannon's smoke
How dense it thickens, till on high,
By the wild storm blasts roughly broke,
It parts in volumes through the sky
That hurriedly are drifting by,
'Till the dread burst breaks forth once more
With whitening clouds which seem to fly
Affrightened from that ceaseless roar.

And there it lightens! Dashed with gore
The thick of battle rends in twain,
While their rough ranks of bristling steel
Flashing afar, while armed men
In mighty masses loud and vast,
Like the wild waters of the main
Lashed into foam.—When, there again
Behold him!

LXII

YET o'er his face a solemn light
Comes smiling from the sky,
And shows to sight the lustre bright
Of his uplifted eye ;
The aimless, heedless carelessness
Of happy infancy
O'er such a solemn fearfulness
Commingling with his glee,
The parted lips, the golden hair ;
Oh who so blest as thee !
Memory ! how thy magic fingers,
With a wild and passing thrill,
Wake the cord whose spirit lingers,
Sleeping silently and still,
Fast asleep and almost dying,
Through my days of changeless pain,
Till I dream the strings are lying,
Never to be waked again.
Winds have blown, but all unknown ;
Nothing could arouse a tone
In that heart which like a stone
Senselessly has lain.
All seemed over—friend and lover
Strove to waken music there ;
Flow the strings their fingers over,
Still in silence swept the air.

Memory! Memory comes at last,
Memory of feelings past,
And with an Æolian blast
Strikes the strings resistlessly.

LXIII

TO A WREATH OF SNOW

O TRANSIENT voyager of heaven!
O silent sign of winter skies!
What adverse wind thy sail has driven
To dungeons where a prisoner lies?

Methinks the hands that shut the sun
So sternly from this morning's brow
Might still their rebel task have done
And checked a thing so frail as thou.

They would have done it had they known
The talisman that dwelt in thee,
For all the suns that ever shone
Have never been so kind to me!

For many a week and many a day
My heart was weighed with sinking gloom
When morning rose in mourning grey
And faintly lit my prison room.

But angel like, when I awoke,
Thy silvery form, so soft and fair,
Shining through darkness, sweetly spoke
Of cloudy skies and mountains bare;

The dearest to a mountaineer
  Who all life long has loved the snow
That crowned his native summits drear,
  Better than greenest plains below.

And voiceless, soulless, messenger,
  Thy presence waked a thrilling tone
That comforts me while thou art here,
  And will sustain when thou art gone.

December 1837, *Emily Jane Brontë.*

LXIV

SONG

KING JULIUS left the south country,
His banners all bravely flying ;
His followers went out with Jubilee,
But they shall return with sighing.

Loud arose the triumphal hymn,
The drums were loudly rolling ;
Yet you might have heard in distant din
How a passing bell was tolling.

The sward so bright from battles won,
With unseen rust is fretting ;
The evening comes before the noon,
The scarce risen sun is setting.

While princes hang upon his breath
And nations round are fearing,
Close by his side a daggered death
With sheathless point stands sneering.

That Death he took a certain aim,
For Death is stony-hearted ;
And in the zenith of his fame
Both power and life departed.

April 20, 1839.

LXV

LINES

I DIE, but when the grave shall press
The heart so long endeared to thee,
When earthly cares no more distress
And earthly joys are nought to me,

Weep not, but think that I have passed
Before thee o'er a sea of gloom,
Have anchored safe, and rest at last
Where tears and mourning cannot come.

'Tis I should weep to leave thee here
On that dark ocean sailing drear,
With storms around and fears before,
And no kind light to point the shore.

But long or short though life may be,
'Tis nothing to eternity:
We part below to meet on high,
Where blissful ages never die.

December 1837.

LXVI

SONG

O BETWEEN distress and pleasure
Fond affection cannot be!
Wretched hearts in vain would treasure
Friendship's joys when others flee.

Well I know thine eye would never
Smile when mine grieved willingly;
Yet I know thine eye for ever
Could not weep in sympathy.

Let us part; the time is over
When I thought and felt like thee;
I will be an ocean rover,
I will sail the desert sea.

Isles there are beyond its billow,
Lands where woe may wander free;
And beloved, thy midnight pillow
Will be soft unwatched by me.

Not on each returning morrow,
When thy heart bounds ardently,
Needst thou then dissemble sorrow,
Marking my despondency.

Day by day some dreary token
Will forsake thy memory,
Till at last, all old links broken,
I shall be a dream to thee.

October 15, 1839.

LXVII

SHED no tears o'er that tomb,
For there are angels weeping ;
Mourn not him whose doom
Heaven itself is mourning.

Look how in sable gloom
The clouds are earthward yearning ;
And earth receives them home,
Even darker clouds returning.

Is it when good men die
That sorrow wakes above?
Grieve Saints when other spirits fly
To swell their choir of love?

Ah! no: with louder sound
The golden harp strings quiver
When good men gain the happy ground
Where they must dwell for ever.

But he who slumbers there
His bark will strive no more
Across the waters of despair
To reach that glorious shore.

The time of grace is past,
And mercy, scorned and tried,
Forsakes to utter wrath at last
The soul so steeled by pride.

That wrath will never spare,
  Will never pity know ;
Will mock its victims maddened prayer,
  Will triumph in his woe.

Shut from his Maker's smile
  The accursed man shall be ;
For mercy reigns a little while,
  But hate eternally.[1]

[1] An alternative in the author's manuscript runs :—
'Compassion smiles a little while,
Revenge eternally.'

LXVIII

Sleep not, dream not; this bright day
Will not, cannot last for aye;
Bliss like thine is bought by years
Dark with torment and with tears.

Sweeter far than placid pleasure
Purer higher beyond measure
Yet, alas! the sooner turning
Into hopeless, endless mourning.

I love thee, boy, for all divine,
All full of God thy features shine.
Darling enthusiast, holy child,
Too good for this world's warring wild;
Too heavenly now, but doomed to be,
Hell-like in heart and misery.

And what shall change that angel brow,
And quench that spirit's glorious glow?
Relentless laws that disallow
True virtue and true joy below.

I too depart, I too decline,
And make thy path no longer mine.
'Tis thus that human minds will turn,
All doomed alike to sin and mourn;
Yet all with long gaze fixed afar,
Adoring virtue's distant star.

July 26, 1837.

LXIX

LINES BY CLAUDIA

I DID not sleep ; 'twas noon of day ;
I saw the burning sunshine fall,
The long grass bending where I lay,
The blue sky brooding over all.

I heard the mellow hum of bees,
And singing birds and sighing trees,
And far away in woody dell
The music of the Sabbath bell.

I did not dream remembrance still
Clasped round my heart its fetter chill ;
But I am sure the soul is free
To leave its clay a little while,
Or how in exile misery
Could I have seen my country smile?

In English fields my limbs were laid,
With English turf beneath my head ;
My spirit wandered o'er that shore
Where nought but it may wander more.

Yet if the soul can thus return,
I need not, and I will not mourn ;

And vainly did you drive me far
With leagues of ocean stretched between:
My mortal flesh you might debar,
But not the eternal fire within.

My monarch died to rule for ever
A heart that can forget him never,
And dear to me, aye doubly dear,
Thoughts shut within the silent tomb,
His name shall be for whoso bear
This long sustained and hopeless doom.

And brighter in the hour of woe
Than in the blaze of victory's pride
That glory-shedding star shall glow
For which we fought and bled and died.

May 28, 1839.

LXX

LINES

FAR away is the land of rest—
  Thousand miles are stretched between,
Many a mountain's stormy crest,
  Many a desert void of green.

Wasted, worn is the traveller,
  Dark his heart and dim his eye;
Without hope or comforter,
  Faltering, faint, and ready to die.

Often he looks to the ruthless sky,
  Often he looks o'er his dreary road,
Often he wishes down to lie
  And render up life's tiresome load.

But yet faint not, mournful man;
  Leagues on leagues are left behind
Since your endless course began;
  Then go on, to toil resigned.

If you still despair, control,
  Hush its whispers in your breast;
You shall reach the final goal,
  You shall win the land of rest.

October 1837.

LXXI

LINES

THE soft unclouded blue of air,
The earth as golden, green, and fair,
And bright as Eden's used to be,
That air and earth have rested me,

Laid on the grass I lapsed away,
Sank back again to childhood's day;
All harsh thoughts perished, memory mild
Subdued both grief and passion wild.

But did the sunshine even now
That bathed his stern and swarthy brow,
Oh did it wake—I long to know—
One whisper, one sweet dream in him,
One lingering joy that years ago
Had faded—lost in distance dim?

That iron man was born like me,
  And he was once an ardent boy;
He must have felt in infancy
  The glory of a summer sky.

Though storms untold his mind has tossed,
He cannot utterly have lost
Remembrance of his early home—
So lost that not a gleam may come.

No vision of his mother's face
When she so fondly mild set free
Her darling child from her embrace
To roam till eve at liberty.

Nor of his haunts, nor of the flowers,
His tiny hand would grateful bear,
Returning from the darkening bowers,
To weave into her glossy hair.

I saw the light breeze kiss his cheek,
His fingers 'mid the roses twined;
I watched to mark one transient streak
Of pensive softness shade his mind.

The open window showed around
A glowing park and glorious sky,
And thick woods swelling with the sound
Of nature's mingled harmony.

Silent he sat. That stormy breast
At length I said has deigned to rest;
At length above that spirit flows
The waveless ocean of repose.

Let me draw near, 'twill soothe to view
His dark eyes dimmed with holy dew;
Remorse even now may wake within
And half unchain his soul from sin.

Perhaps this is the destined hour
When Hell shall lose its fatal power,
And Heaven itself shall bend above
To hail the soul redeemed by love.

Unmarked I gazed, my idle thought
Passed with the ray whose shine it caught;
One glance revealed how little care
He felt for all the beauty there.

Oh! crime can make the heart grow old
  Sooner than years of wearing woe,
Can turn the warmest bosom cold
  As winter wind or polar snow.

April 28, 1839.

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Wind
Recollection – past
all is over
pp 170-180 – of W. H.